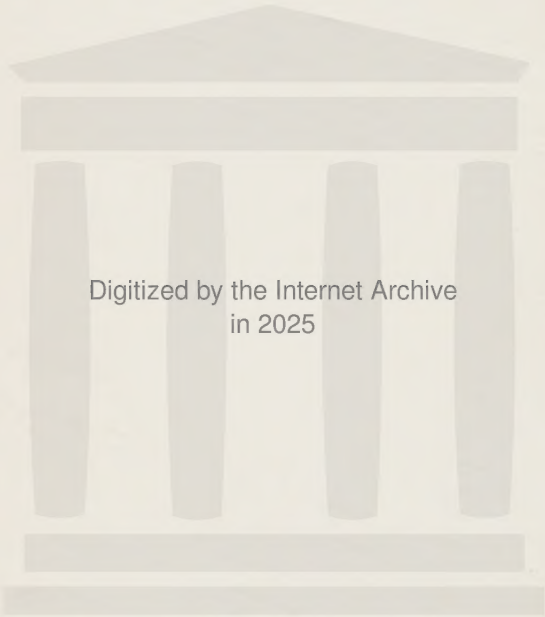
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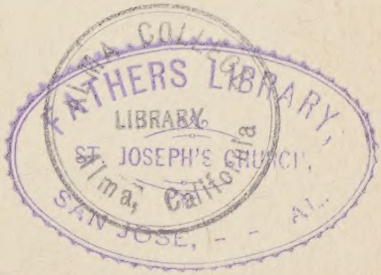
LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART



THE LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART

COMMENTARY & MEDITATIONS

BY

REV. JOSEPH McDONNELL, S.J.

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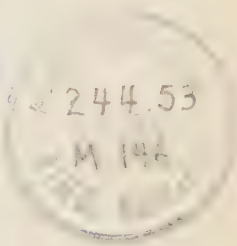

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Die 29 Aprilis, 1912.

TO

JESUS CHRIST,

THE SON OF GOD,

THE SECOND PERSON OF THE

EVER-BLESSED TRINITY,

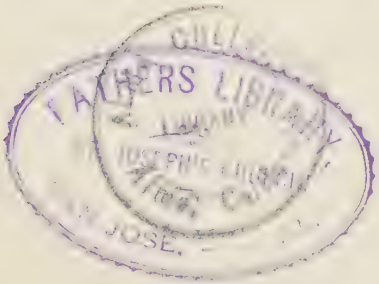
THE WRITER,

PROSTRATE IN PROFOUND ADORATION

BEFORE THE DIVINE MAJESTY,

HUMBLY DEDICATES

THE FOLLOWING PAGES



FOREWORD

THE following Commentary and Meditations appeared in the *Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart* during the years 1909-1912.

As far as I know, this is the first time that such a work has been undertaken in the English language. It will, therefore, I suppose, carry with it something of the attraction of being new and fresh.

I trust this book may be found useful to preachers as well as to the faithful in general, inasmuch as it supplies material, hitherto but little used, for sermons and instructions on the Sacred Heart. In this it will attain a useful end, in view of the custom, now creeping in in many places, and warmly approved of by the Holy See, of having special devotions with a short sermon daily throughout the month of June ; or, where this cannot be done, at least a novena of sermons and devotions for the

feast itself. Apart from this, the book affords suitable matter for reading and meditation in religious communities for the thirty days of June.

In writing these pages I have derived much help from the excellent French works on the subject by Le Chanoine L. Le Roy and Père Drive, S.J. To both of these writers I desire to express my obligations.

I have also to express my gratitude to the Rev. Thomas Taaffe, S.J., Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Milltown Park, for his kindness in revising the proofs.

May Our Lord deign to bless this little effort to promote devotion to His Sacred Heart.

JOSEPH McDONNELL, S.J.

DUBLIN,
April, 1912.

LITANIÆ SACRATISSIMI CORDIS JESU.

THE following is the Latin text of the Litany of the Sacred Heart, approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, April 2, 1899.

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.
Christe audi nos.
Christe exaudi nos.

Pater de cœlis Deus,
Fili Redemptor mundi Deus,
Spiritus Sancte Deus,
Sancta Trinitas unus Deus
1. Cor Jesu, Filii Patris æterni,
2. Cor Jesu, in sinu Virginis Matris a Spiritu Sancto formatum,
3. Cor Jesu, Verbo Dei substantialiter unitum,
4. Cor Jesu, Majestatis infinitæ,
5. Cor Jesu, templum Dei Sanctum,
6. Cor Jesu, tabernaculum Altissimi,
7. Cor Jesu, domus Dei et porta cœli,
8. Cor Jesu, fornax ardens caritatis,
9. Cor Jesu, justitiæ et amoris receptaculum,
10. Cor Jesu, bonitate et amore plenum,
11. Cor Jesu, virtutum omnium abyssus,
12. Cor Jesu, omni laude dignissimum,
13. Cor Jesu, rex et centrum omnium cordium,
14. Cor Jesu, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ,
15. Cor Jesu, in quo habitat omnis plenitudo Divinitatis,
16. Cor Jesu, in quo Pater sibi bene complacuit,
17. Cor Jesu, de cujus plenitudine omnes nos accepimus,
18. Cor Jesu, desiderium collium æternorum,

Miserere nobis.

19. Cor Jesu, patiens et multæ misericordiæ,
20. Cor Jesu, dives in omnes qui invocant Te,
21. Cor Jesu, fons vitæ et sanctitatis,
22. Cor Jesu, propitiatio pro peccatis nostris,
23. Cor Jesu, saturatum opprobriis,
24. Cor Jesu, attritum propter scelera nostra,
25. Cor Jesu, usque ad mortem obediens factum,
26. Cor Jesu, lancea perforatum,
27. Cor Jesu, fons totius consolationis,
28. Cor Jesu, vita et resurrectio nostra,
29. Cor Jesu, pax et reconciliatio nostra,
30. Cor Jesu, victima peccatorum,
31. Cor Jesu, salus in Te sperantium,
32. Cor Jesu, spes in Te morientium,
33. Cor Jesu, deliciæ Sanctorum omnium,

Miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *Parce nobis, Domine.*
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *Exaudi nos, Domine.*
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, *Miserere nobis.*
V. Jesu mitis et humilis Corde,
R. *Fac cor nostrum secundum Cor tuum.*

Oremus.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, respice in Cor dilectissimi Filii tui, et in laudes et satisfactiones, quas in nomine peccatorum tibi persolvit, iisque misericordiam tuam petentibus Tu veniam concede placatus, in nomine ejusdem Filii tui Jesu Christi, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. *Amen.*

LITANY OF THE MOST SACRED HEART.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father, of Heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Ghost,
Holy Trinity, one God,

1. Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father,
2. Heart of Jesus, formed in the womb of the Virgin Mother by the Holy Ghost,
3. Heart of Jesus, united substantially with the Word of God,
4. Heart of Jesus, of infinite majesty,
5. Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God,
6. Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High,
7. Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of Heaven,
8. Heart of Jesus, glowing furnace of charity,
9. Heart of Jesus, vessel of justice and love,
10. Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love,
11. Heart of Jesus, abyss of all virtues,
12. Heart of Jesus, most worthy of all praise,
13. Heart of Jesus, King and centre of all hearts,
14. Heart of Jesus, in which are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,
15. Heart of Jesus, in which dwells all the fullness of the Divinity,
16. Heart of Jesus, in which the Father is well pleased.
17. Heart of Jesus, of whose fullness we have all received,
18. Heart of Jesus, Desire of the eternal hills,
19. Heart of Jesus, patient and rich in mercy,
20. Heart of Jesus, rich to all who invoke Thee,
21. Heart of Jesus, fount of life and holiness,

Have mercy on us.

22. Heart of Jesus, propitiation for our sins,
23. Heart of Jesus, saturated with revilings,
24. Heart of Jesus, crushed for our iniquities,
25. Heart of Jesus, made obedient unto death,
26. Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance,
27. Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation,
28. Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection,
29. Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation,
30. Heart of Jesus, victim of our sins,
31. Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who hope in Thee,
32. Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in Thee,
33. Heart of Jesus, delight of all the Saints,

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. Jesus meek and humble of heart,
R. *Make our hearts like to Thine.*

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, graciously regard the Heart of Thy well-beloved Son, and the acts of praise and satisfaction which He renders Thee on behalf of us sinners, and through their merit grant pardon to us who implore Thy mercy in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. *Amen.*

NOTE.—This English version of the Litany is that found in the seventh edition of the *Raccolta*, published in 1910, and bearing the *Imprimatur* of the Archdiocese of Westminster. In some of the titles, *e.g.*, the 20th, 23rd and 24th, the translation of the Scripture text, as it appears in the title, differs from that found in the Douay Bible.

THE LITANY OF THE SACRED HEART

COMMENTARY AND MEDITATIONS

FIRST TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, SON OF THE ETERNAL FATHER.

1st Prelude.—Behold Our Lord as He appeared to Blessed Margaret Mary, pointing to His Heart all on fire with consuming love of men.

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to understand clearly the solid foundations on which devotion to the Sacred Heart is built.

COMMENTARY.

In this first title of the Litany may be discovered the foundation-stone of the great edifice of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Jesus Christ is God, He is the Son of the Eternal Father. As God He is from all eternity, as Man He was born in time. He has, therefore, two *Natures:* the human and the divine. These two natures are hypostatically united in one *Person.* Therefore the Heart of Jesus is the Heart of God Himself, and, as such, is worthy of our adoration. In this title is contained the answer to the questions—*What* is this Heart that we adore?

Why do we adore It? *To Whom* or to What is this homage addressed—is it to the Heart Itself considered as apart from the Person Whose Heart It is, or is it to Him Whose Heart It is? These questions are fundamental. Ignorance, real or alleged, of the correct answers to them lay at the root of the opposition offered to this devotion by the Jansenists of old—lies, too, at the root of whatever misconception still exists regarding it.

1. **The Heart of Jesus the Real Living Heart of the Man-God.**—Jesus Christ is the Son of God made man, the Second Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity. Therefore the Sacred Heart is the real living Heart of the Man-God. During the period that elapsed between Christ's Death and His Resurrection His Body and His Soul, though separated one from the other, were never for an instant separated from the Divine Person. Since the Resurrection the Heart of Jesus is the living Heart that animates the risen Humanity of the Son of God, now for ever glorious in Heaven. This is the Divine Heart that the Catholic Church now presents for our adoration.

No one, says Cardinal Franzelin (*De Verbo Incarnato*, these 45), ever dreamt of adoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus as separated from the Sacred Humanity of which It is a necessary part, or without reference to the hypostatic union, or to the Divine Person to Whom this Sacred Humanity—including, of course, the Sacred Heart—belongs since the moment of the Incarnation. One and the same homage of adoration, pursues Franzelin, is offered to the Person of the Word Incarnate, and in this Person to the entire Sacred Humanity, and therefore to Its living, animated Heart, hypostatically united

to the Divinity, and formally considered as the Heart of the Second Divine Person made Man, and as a Divine object, which, because It is the seal and instrument of the affections of the Man-God, because, too, It is the symbol of the love and of the whole interior life of the Redeemer, represents the Man-God, and places Him before us as the object of our worship and our adoration.

Pope Pius VI., in the Bull *Auctorem fidei*, condemns the Jansenist contention that devotion to the Sacred Heart implies the rendering of adoration to a portion of the Sacred Humanity, looked upon as apart from and separated from the Divinity of Christ. The Bull reminds us that the Catholic Church teaches the faithful to adore the Heart of Jesus considered as such—that is to say, as the Heart of the Person of the Son of God, to Whom It is inseparably and hypostatically united.

2. **The Homage rendered to the Sacred Heart is rendered to the Divine Person of the Son of God made Man.**—Worship is defined by Cardinal Franzelin, following Suarez and De Lugo, as "an act of submission in regard to another on account of his excellence and superiority." From this definition these theological writers derive a conclusion that has a very important bearing on devotion to the Sacred Heart. They say that the real and complete object of the worship so paid is not any mere portion of the person thus honoured; it is not any mere excellence, or perfection, or superiority in him, viewed by itself, that is the ultimate object of our worship, but, rather, his entire person. We may, indeed, have before our mind some special excellence of his, but, nevertheless, the honour we

pay to him is addressed, not to this particular phase of perfection, but to the person himself. "When I rise in presence of my superior," says De Lugo, "when I lift my hat to him, or show him other marks of respect, I render this homage to the entire *person* of my superior, not to any *portion* of that person."

Applying this principle to the present case, when we adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the real, the complete, and ultimate material object of our adoration is not the Heart, viewed by Itself or apart from the Sacred Humanity and Person of the Man-God, but rather the Divine Person of the Son of God made Man, though with special reference to His Divine Heart. The Bishops of Poland in a memorial presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in behalf of Devotion to the Sacred Heart, conclude thus with Father Gallifet, S.J.: "We may therefore pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and address to It all the homage that may be offered to the Person of Christ; because, whatever worship is addressed to the Heart is by that very fact addressed to the Person Whose Heart It is." Lastly, Pope Leo XIII., in his Encyclical of 1900, consecrating the entire world to the Sacred Heart, asserts that this act of homage is rendered to the Divine Person of the Redeemer, and that its purpose is to promote the reign of Jesus Christ by His love over the hearts of all men.

3. **This Homage is the "Cultus Latriæ," or Homage of Supreme Worship.**—There are two kinds of *cultus*, or worship—the *cultus latriæ* and the *cultus duliæ*. We shall let Suarez explain how they differ. "Since worship," he says, "is paid to a person on account of his excellence or superiority,

the nature of the worship rendered will differ according to the different nature of the excellence or superiority in question. Now, there is excellence that is uncreated and infinite, and an excellence that is created and finite. There is also, therefore, the worship rendered to excellence that is uncreated and infinite, and this we call *latria ;* there is also the worship rendered to excellence that is created and finite, and this we call *dulia"* (Suarez, in 3, q. 25, disp. 51, sec. 3, n. 4).

It is unnecessary here to show that the worship paid to the Divine Person of the Son of God made Man is that supreme form of worship called *cultus latriæ*, or adoration. Now, in the last point it has been demonstrated that the homage rendered to the Sacred Heart is in reality homage rendered to the Divine Person of the Man-God. Therefore this homage is the *cultus latriæ*, or homage of supreme worship.

It may be urged as an objection that the Sacred Heart of Christ and His Sacred Humanity, of which His Heart is a portion, are both created, and therefore worthy only of the *cultus duliæ*. To this St. Thomas answers that the objection does not hold, " because the *cultus latriæ* is rendered to the Humanity of Jesus Christ, not by reason of His Humanity, but by reason of the Divinity, to which the Humanity is united, and by virtue of which Christ is not inferior to His Father " (*Summa*, 3, q. 25, a. 2, ad 2 et 3). In other words, the human Heart of the Saviour is the object of our adoration, not because of Itself viewed apart from the Person of Christ, but because of the infinite excellence of the Person Whose Heart It is.

MEDITATION.

We owe the Sacred Heart Adoration, Gratitude, Imitation.

The Heart of Jesus is the Heart of God. Hence we owe to It a threefold homage—namely (1) The homage of *adoration ;* (2) the homage of *gratitude ;* (3) the homage of *imitation.*

1. **Adoration.**—It is a Divine Heart no less than a human Heart. We do not pay a *separate* homage to the Divine Nature and to the human Nature in Christ. The Council of Lateran condemns such doctrine. "If anyone," it says, "asserts that we adore Jesus Christ in two natures, admitting two species of adoration, one for God, the other for man, taken separately . . . let him be anathema." Hence the Humanity of Christ is the worthy object of our adoration. And the centre and the noblest organ of that adorable Humanity is the Sacred Heart. It is the fountain of the Precious Blood, Its source and spring. It is the symbol of Christ's everlasting love, the furnace of Its burning ardour, the very centre and focus of His human life of love.

2. **Gratitude.** — This should be proportioned to the favours we have received. The first and most important favour is that of Divine adoption—namely, "that we should be called and should be the sons of God" (1 John iii. 1). It is to the love, and tenderness, and goodness of the Sacred Heart we owe this Divine sonship. Through Him we are the sons of God. Again, the wonders of Christ's

Life, and Passion, and Death, and of His eucharistic action on the altar, are all explained and epitomized in the all-consuming love of His Sacred Heart for men. Hence gratitude, or the loving acknowledgment of our indebtedness to Christ for all His goodness, is an essential constituent of true devotion to the Sacred Heart.

3. **Imitation.**—" I have given you an example " (John xiii. 15), He tells us. He is the model for our imitation. The truest exercise of devotion to His Sacred Heart consists in copying His meekness, His humility, His obedience, and His other virtues. " Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart."

SECOND TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, FORMED IN THE WOMB OF THE VIRGIN MOTHER BY THE HOLY GHOST.

1st Prelude.—Behold the Angel Gabriel appearing to Our Blessed Lady and saying to her; " Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus " (Luke i. 31). And again, in reply to her question how this was to be accomplished : " The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God " (Luke i. 35).

2nd Prelude.—As in last Meditation.

COMMENTARY.

The previous title mainly regards the Divine Nature in Christ; this title directs our attention chiefly to His human Nature. We may distinguish

two separate statements in this invocation—(1) The Heart of Jesus was formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary; (2) the Heart of Jesus was formed by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

1. **The Heart of Jesus was formed in the Womb of the Virgin Mary.**—"Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus" (Luke i. 31). The Heart of Jesus was formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Christ is truly the Son of Mary. His Heart is a truly human Heart. He is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. "For if this flesh was not truly ours," says St. Leo, "it would not in reality be human, and the Word would not have become flesh nor have dwelt amongst us" (Sermon 30, *On the Nativity*). If, then, the Body of Christ was truly born of the Virgin Mary, His Heart was assuredly formed in her maternal womb. As the body of the child is derived from its mother, so the Heart of Jesus is derived from Mary. It is the offspring of her life, a Divine flower of matchless and transcendent beauty springing from her Virgin breast.

Here we find the secret of the wonderfully close relationship between Our Lady and the Sacred Heart. The Mother and the Son are indissolubly linked together in an everlasting bond of mutual love. Hence it is that we approach the Sacred Heart through Mary; that through her hands we offer Him the thoughts, words, acts, and sufferings of our daily lives. Hence it is that, with St. Cyril of Alexandria, we cry aloud in ecstasy of joy: "Hail Mary, Mother of God, august treasure of the universe . . . Mother and Virgin . . . we salute thee, who in thy

virginal womb didst carry Him, Who is unbounded and incomprehensible."

2. **The Heart of Jesus was formed by the Operation of the Holy Ghost.**—" The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee " (Luke i. 35), said the Angel to Our Blessed Lady. " I believe in Jesus Christ . . . Who was *conceived by the Holy Ghost,*" are the words of the Apostles' Creed. Not that the *Word* was conceived by the Holy Ghost, for the *Word* is from the Father from eternity ; but that the Sacred Humanity, whereby Jesus is " the Son of man," was formed in the Virgin Mother by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

St. Thomas (*Summa*, p. 3, q. 32, a. 1) gives three reasons why the Incarnation is especially attributed to the Holy Ghost : (1) The object of the Incarnation was to raise and sanctify the human race. Now, the work of sanctifiying is a peculiar attribute of the Holy Ghost, Who is the " Spirit of Sanctification." (2) The Incarnation is the accomplishment and bestowal of God's grace, and this is the special office of the Holy Ghost. (3) The Incarnation is, above all, the work of Divine love, according to the saying of St. John : " God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son " (John iii. 16). Now, the Holy Ghost is pre-eminently the Spirit of Love ; He is the substantial love of the Father and the Son. The Sacred Humanity is the masterpiece of God's omnipotence, His choicest work ; and the noblest part of Christ's Humanity, the focus and the centre of its infinite perfections, is the Sacred Heart, the *chef d'œuvre* of the operation of the Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION.

Two Roads to the Sacred Heart.

There are two royal roads leading to devotion to the Sacred Heart—the *Holy Ghost* and *Our Blessed Lady*.

1. **The Holy Ghost.**—*First*, because the Holy Ghost is the *Spirit of Love*, and Divine love is the salient characteristic of devotion to the Sacred Heart. "I am come to cast fire on the earth," says Jesus Christ of old, "and what will I but that it be kindled?" This love which Our Lord would fain enkindle in all hearts is the ardent fire of charity that glows with such intensity within the furnace of His Sacred Heart. It is through the action of the Holy Spirit that it is infused into our souls. "I will send Him [the Paraclete] to you" (John xvi. 7). "He will teach you all truth" (*ibid.* 13). He is the Spirit of that wisdom and piety which consists in loving God above all created things. *Secondly*, the Sacred Heart is in a special manner the work of the Holy Ghost. For the formation of the Sacred Humanity, of which the Sacred Heart is in many ways the centre, is due the action of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." Therefore, naturally, the Holy Ghost leads us to the Sacred Heart, and inspires devotion to the Sacred Heart into our minds.

2. **Our Blessed Lady.**—Mary leads us to her Son. His Sacred Heart was formed in her immaculate womb. Its earliest throbbings beat in unison with her Immaculate Heart. No mother ever loved her

son as she did. No mother ever was more zealous for the honour of her son than she. It follows that she longs most earnestly that He should reign in every heart, and that, as our Mother and His alike, she uses all her influence to draw us near to Him, to kindle in our hearts the deep and tender love of His most Sacred Heart.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, send the Holy Spirit down upon us as Thou didst of old upon the chosen Twelve, that He may set our poor cold hearts on fire with Thy love, and dwell for ever with us by the ever-present gift of sanctifying grace. Teach us, too, O Heart of Jesus, to approach Thee through the Immaculate Heart of Thine own Mother Mary, that, led by her maternal hand, we may draw near to Thee in ever-growing confidence and love.

THIRD TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, UNITED SUBSTANTIALLY WITH THE WORD OF GOD

1st Prelude.—Behold Christ the Man-God in all the splendour of His glory, surrounded by the angelic choirs, coming in the clouds of Heaven to judge the nations.

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to realize the infinite majesty of the Sacred Heart, substantially united to the Word of God.

COMMENTARY.

In this title is set forth the nature of the union that exists between the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Word of God. By the Word of God is meant the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, according to the sublime description of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (John i. 1-14).

Union in general may be any one of three kinds: metaphorical, moral, and physical. Physical union may be either accidental or substantial.

As an example of a union that is merely *metaphorical*, one might suppose the case of a Saint to whom Our Lord should say: "You belong to Me for ever: your heart is Mine." Here clearly the heart of the creature could only be spoken of as being that of God in a purely metaphorical sense. It is not in this manner that the Sacred Heart is united with the Word of God.

The Prophets of the Old Testament, when writing or acting under the special inspiration of God, might be said to have been *morally* united with Him. This, again, is not the union that exists between the Heart of Jesus and the Word of God. These links cannot be reduced to a mere moral union (*vide* Franzelin, these 21). The union here in question is a *real, physical* union, and the invocation adds that it is, moreover, a *substantial* union.

Setting aside the exterior union of mere juxtaposition, there are two kinds of intimate physical union. My thoughts are most intimately united with my intellect. Yet my intellect can exist quite independent of them: this union, though intimate and real, is merely *accidental*. On the other hand, my soul and body are still more really and intimately united, so much so that neither can exist apart

from the other as an independent and at the same time perfect being. They always bear a necessary relation to each other, thus to constitute a human being—a person. Here, at length, we have an instance of physical *substantial* union.

In Christ the Man-God, however, the substantial union between the human Nature and the Divine Word involves a union of two distinct natures, the one created, the other uncreated—namely, the human and the Divine. This substantial union is not the mere indwelling of the Divine Word in a man complete in himself, apart from the Divine Word. This union satisfies the essential exigency of every human nature—that, namely, of subsisting in a person. The man it is that constitutes the complete whole. In all other instances the human being is in its entirety a *created* being. In the case of Christ the personality of the *uncreated* Word, without absorbing the human nature, and without undergoing any change itself, is united to His human nature, to form with it a man, a real human being, who is at the same time God.

Hence the Heart of Jesus, being substantially united to the Divine Word, is the Heart of the Son of God. As such It is worthy of the homage of adoration paid to God alone.

This invocation constitutes an express refutation of various heresies, which either distinguish two persons in Jesus Christ or else admit only a moral union between Jesus and the Word of God, or which, in fine, blend, as it were, the two natures into one.

MEDITATION.

Our Union with the Sacred Heart—Perfect, Indissoluble, Sanctifying.

This union should be, under certain aspects at least, the model of that which should exist between us and the Sacred Heart. We should strive to make our union with the Heart of Jesus (1) perfect, (2) indissoluble, (3) sanctifying.

1. **Perfect Union.**—So intimately united is the Heart of Jesus with the Divinity that all its desires, affections, and inclinations are Divine. Our poor erring hearts, on the other hand, are carried away by affection to the things of earth. Pleasure, honour, wealth, the myriad vanities that men pursue, as children do a passing butterfly, these are the cherished objects of our hearts' desires. Oh, that we would learn to model our hearts upon the Heart of Christ! Oh, that we could be ever closely united to God in all our thoughts and words and actions! Oh, that we could only wish what He wishes, love only what He loves, seek only what He seeks for, value only what He values, in short, live for Him and love Him alone!

2. **Indissoluble Union.**—So indissolubly united to the Divine Word is the Sacred Heart that nothing can ever sever this eternal bond. Even in death His sacred Body still remained united to the Divinity. O Jesus! grant, in like manner, that, despite the efforts of the devil, the attractions of the world around me, and the weakness of my own frail yield-

ing spirit, I may, in joy and sorrow, failure and success, be ever indissolubly united to Thee. Deaden the attractions of the wicked world, withdraw me from its evil influence, ward off the snares it lays for my destruction. Strengthen and fortify me yet more and more in Thy love and everlasting service. Let nothing separate me from Thee, but rather draw closer, day by day, the links of love that bind me to Thy service for eternity. Let Thy grace so take possession of my heart that nothing in life or death may sever or lessen in the least degree, the everlasting union of my heart with Thine. "Ne permittas me separari a te" (Prayer of St. Ignatius).

3. **Sanctifying Union.**—The union of the Heart of Jesus with the Word sanctified It with the sanctity of God Himself. In our own measure and degree we shall, in like manner, be sanctified by supernatural union with the Heart of Christ. Has He not Himself promised to the clients of His Sacred Heart that "the tepid shall become fervent," and that "the fervent shall speedily rise to high perfection"? No one can faithfully practise devotion to the Sacred Heart without being sanctified by It in a high degree. O Jesus! may my heart be so perfectly and indissolubly united to Thine that, consumed in the ardent fire of Thy love, my sins may disappear, and my soul may be ever enriched with the priceless treasures of sanctifying grace.—Amen.

FOURTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, OF INFINITE MAJESTY.

COMMENTARY.

This title follows, as a natural consequence, from the preceding. The Sacred Heart, by virtue of Its being substantially united to the Divine Word, is, as a necessary consequence, infinite in majesty. It is not, indeed, of Its own nature infinite, eternal, or immense. But by virtue of Its union with the Word It becomes possessed of infinite dignity and majesty. It is the Heart of a Divine Person, whose majesty is, therefore, infinite. It is the Heart of God Himself. The Apostles on the Mount of Thabor saw something of this resplendent majesty and glory in the Transfiguration, and so overcome were they that, we are told, they "fell upon their face and were very much afraid" (Matt. xvii. 6). St. John seems to make allusion to this vision when he says, speaking of the Word made flesh: "We saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father" (John i. 14). Again, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, says that "in the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue shall confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 10, 11). St. Matthew and St. Luke remind us of the awful majesty and splendour of His second coming at the day of general judgment, when "the Son of man shall come in His majesty and all the Angels with Him; then shall He sit on the seat of His majesty"

(Matt. xxv. 31) ; and again, " They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven, with much power and majesty " (Matt. xxiv. 30). So dreadful will the splendours of His majesty appear to the wicked at that day that they will wither away with fear, and even call upon the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the terrors of that awful face. On the other hand, how inexplicably sweet and glorious will Our Blessed Lord appear, in all the radiant loveliness and splendour of His glorified Humanity, to those who, while on earth, were faithful, loving clients of His Sacred Heart! "Amen, I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of His majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that hath left home, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting " (Matt. xix. 28, 29).

All this majesty and splendour were His as He lay a trembling Infant in His Mother's arms in the cave of Bethlehem ; all this majesty was His throughout the silent years at Nazareth ; all this majesty was His amid the scenes of outrage and reproach that marked His Passion and Death—nay, underneath the eucharistic veils there ever shines this everlasting glory of the Godhead. The Heart of Jesus is infinite, indeed, in majesty.

MEDITATION.

Our Duties to the Sacred Heart.

What, then, are our duties towards this Divine Heart of infinite majesty? They may be reduced to three: (1) Adoration, (2) humility, (3) confidence.

1. **Adoration.**—In presence of the Divine splendours of the Sacred Heart, clothed with all the uncreated glory of the Godhead, we poor wretched worms of earth should fall in prostrate adoration, seeking, were it possible, to utterly sink back, with entire self-annihilation, into the depths of our own nothingness, and offering to that resplendent Heart of love the completest homage of our adoration and profound respect.

2. **Humility.**—As I turn my eyes from that vision of ineffable holiness and purity and burning love of God back into the depths of wickedness, and sin, and base ingratitude within my own poor sinful heart, what a startling contrast do I find! The Heart of Jesus is so perfect, mine so steeped in wickedness and sin! The Heart of Jesus is so entirely devoted to His Heavenly Father, mine so wrapped in things of earth! The Heart of Jesus is so fierce a furnace of most ardent love of God, mine so icy cold, so utterly indifferent to all God's boundless love for me! The Heart of Jesus, in a word, so worthy of the everlasting love and homage of both men and Angels, mine so deserving of the contempt and scorn of all God's creatures!

3. **Confidence.**—And yet that Heart, so great, so noble, of such transcendent majesty, vouchsafes to turn to *me* for sympathy and love. " I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none, and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none " (Ps. lxviii. 21). " Behold this Heart which has loved men so much that It has spared nothing, even so far as to exhaust and consume Itself, in order to testify to them its love " (*Words of Jesus to Blessed Margaret M. Alacoque*). Filled with profound astonishment at this amazing condescension of my Saviour, my heart will surely overflow with gratitude, and love, and confidence, towards the loving Heart of Jesus, and, full of boundless trust, I shall say to Him, with St. Peter of old : " Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life " (John vi. 69) ; or with Father de la Columbière : " Though Thou shouldst kill me, even then will I trust in Thee."

FIFTH TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, HOLY TEMPLE OF GOD.

1st Prelude.—Behold the Sacred Heart of Jesus glowing with ineffable splendour and radiating on all sides dazzling beams of light.

2nd Prelude.—Beg grace to understand how the Sacred Heart is the Temple of God and the Tabernacle of the Most High.

COMMENTARY.

During His public life on earth Christ spoke of His Sacred Body as a *temple*. When the Jews asked Him : " What sign dost Thou show unto us, seeing

Thou dost these things? Jesus answered and said to them: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up. The Jews then said: Six and forty years was this temple in building, and will Thou raise it up in three days?" (John ii. 18-20). And St. John explains: "But He spoke of the temple of His Body" (John ii. 21), which should rise on the third day from the tomb. Even the body of the just man is styled by St. Paul "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi. 19). The Old Testament is full of the glory of King Solomon's Temple. This temple consisted, according to à Lapide, of two principal parts—the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies. The Sanctuary, which was, as it were, the outer hall or temple of laics, contained the golden altar of incense, where the sacred fire was kept aglow, and the aroma of sweetest perfumes ascended aloft to Jehovah's throne. The Holy of Holies was the inner and more sacred portion of the temple, where the priests alone might enter. Here stood the altar of holocausts, and this portion was termed by excellence "the Temple of God."

It is not hard to see how the temple of old was a type of the Sacred Heart. Père Eudes, in his work on the Heart of Mary, traces the likeness in glowing words, epitomized by Père Drive, S.J., as follows: "It is the Holy Ghost Himself Who has built this magnificent Temple. Cemented with Mary's virginal blood, consecrated with the unction of the Divinity, dedicated to Him Who is everlasting love, It is infinitely holier, richer, more venerable than any temple, material or spiritual, that has ever existed on earth or in Heaven. It is in this Temple, alone

worthy of Him, that God is fittingly adored. Immortal and sacrosanct, It is beyond the reach of ruin, or outrage, or profanation. It is adorned, as with so many living pictures, with every perfection and every virtue. Happy is he to whom it is given to penetrate into this Temple, wrought by the Divine Hands, there to admire Its riches, to contemplate Its splendour, to live and die therein in an ecstasy of boundless love."

Not alone is the Heart of Jesus a temple; It is, moreover, an *altar of sacrifice.* Here burns, night and day, the sacred fire of Divine love. Here does the Great High-Priest Himself offer up various sacrifices of priceless worth. He immolates Himself as a most precious Victim, a Holocaust of infinite value. His thoughts, His words, His actions, His sufferings, His Body and Soul—all are offered up on the golden altar of His Heart for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind.

The Sacred Heart is likewise an *altar of incense.* From Its censor of gold rise, like clouds of sweetest incense, the all-powerful prayers, the glorious worship, the ineffable appeals for succour and strength for His children, the cries of atonement that, keen and strong, reach from the great human Heart of the Saviour straight to the Triune God on high.

MEDITATION.

Duties rendered to God in this Temple.

We visit the Temple of God to *adore,* to *thank,* and to *make our petitions.* These three duties we shall most efficaciously accomplish by uniting our adora-

tions, thanksgivings, and petitions with those which the human Heart of Christ offers to God.

1. **To Adore.**—We are bound to offer to our Maker the homage of our adoration. Yet how can we, utterly insignificant beings that we are, offer Him the adoration that is His due? Of ourselves we can do nothing. But in the Sacred Heart we have a means of adequately paying off our debt. "Make known to men," said Our Lord on one occasion to His servant, Blessed Margaret Mary, "that I ever stand in the presence of God the Father pleading in their behalf, and that if, through human frailty, they are guilty of a fault, I offer in their stead My own unblemished Heart." I will, then, offer up to God the homage, glory, and adoration that the Sacred Heart is ever offering to Him in the tabernacle. At the solemn moment of the consecration of the Mass I will offer up the infinite Sacrifice of the Sacred Heart to His Eternal Father, as an adequate and perfect Sacrifice of adoration.

2. **To Thank.**—My life is a tissue of God's never-ending favours. Left to my unaided efforts, I can never thank Him as I ought. I will ask the Sacred Heart to thank Him for me. I will offer Him the royal Heart of His Divine Son Jesus Christ in full and adequate discharge of all my debts.

3. **To Offer Our Petitions.**—Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation wrote to her director: "One day when, in the silence of my cell, I was praying for the conversion of sinners, I perceived that my petitions were not heard. I knew not what to think, when suddenly a voice within me

said: 'Ask of Me through the Heart of My Son; it is through Him that I will hear you.'" And she tells us that from that day forth she never failed to seek for everything she wanted through the Sacred Heart, and never was her prayer refused.

In fine, let us erect in our hearts an *altar of sacrifice*, by making an unreserved oblation and sacrifice of all that we have and all that we are to the Sacred Heart, and by cultivating the spirit of mortification. Let us also set up in our souls an *altar of incense*, by making our lives lives of prayer, offering all our thoughts, words, and actions to God, and living at all times in His Divine presence.

SIXTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, TABERNACLE OF THE MOST HIGH.

Preludes.—As in last Meditation.

COMMENTARY.

In the Old Law the Tabernacle was the tent-like edifice which, before the building of the Temple, contained the Ark of the Covenant and the Tables of the Law. In the new dispensation the Tabernacle is the repository in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. In both cases it is in the *centre* towards which all religious worship converges.

In like manner the Sacred Heart is the very *centre of the Church's life*. "Devotion to the Sacred Heart is the very quintessence of Christianity," wrote Cardinal Pie. "I cannot think of Jesus, love Jesus, honour Jesus, unless you allow me to love and honour His Sacred Heart." And in his famous

Encyclical of May, 1899, consecrating the entire human race to the Sacred Heart, and pointing to the Divine Heart as the source and centre of all graces and blessings to men, Pope Leo XIII. reminds us how, as the Emperor Constantine saw the cross in the heavens as a token of approaching triumph and victory for the Church, so "to-day there is placed before us another sacred and Divine emblem, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, over which is erected the Cross, all glowing with splendour, in the midst of surrounding flames. In It we must place all our hopes; to It we must look for the graces necessary for the salvation of mankind."

The *Ark of the Covenant*, standing within the Old Testament Tabernacle, is also a type of the Sacred Heart. The Heart of the Man-God is like the Ark—a bond of union between Heaven and earth. Moreover, the Ark was "overlaid with the purest gold within and without" (Exod. xxv. 11). Gold is a symbol of *charity*—the burning love that consumes the great Heart of Christ.

The *Tables of the Law* were also contained in the Tabernacle. And within the Heart of Jesus there is also a heavenly decalogue, which is set forth in an old French book of devotion: (1) To seek no pleasure but in that Heart; (2) to reflect on Its sorrows; (3) to crucify body and soul; (4) to prepare for the judgment; (5) to be meek, and humble, and lowly; (6) to desire contempt; (7) to follow the Saviour closely; (8) to carry your sorrows to Him; (9) to seek His good pleasure in all things; (10) to aim at the highest perfection.

MEDITATION.

Within the Tabernacle of the Eucharistic Heart.

1. **The Double Movement of the Sacred Heart.**—Venerable Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament was once privileged to enter into the Sacred Heart, wherein, as in a burning furnace of most ardent love, she found herself enclosed. She was filled with a desire to be consumed with love, to spend herself in the service of the Divine Heart. She noticed Its double movement of compression and expansion, spoken of by Saints Gertrude and Mechtildis. In Its movement of compression It annihilates Itself in presence of the mighty God, and offers Itself to Him in sacrifice of priceless value. In Its movement of expansion It pours forth into the mystic Body of the Church the vital energy and vigour that supports it. Let us seek a share in the wondrous benefits accruing from this double movement of the Heart of Christ.

2. **The Sacred Heart a Boundless Ocean.**—The servant of God then saw that the Sacred Heart was, in truth, a boundless ocean of virtue, peace, and blessedness, containing endless treasures in Its mighty depths. Ask of It to pour into your soul some drops from out of this great ocean of all good.

3. **The Sacred Heart a Palace of Unbounded Wealth.**—She also learned that the Sacred Heart is *a palace of unbounded wealth*, where all the richest graces are existing in profusion. We enter into

that palace by endeavouring to grow in likeness to the Sacred Heart, in the practice of Its special virtues of charity, and meekness, and humility.

SEVENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, HOUSE OF GOD AND GATE OF HEAVEN.

1st Prelude.—Behold Jacob of old wakening up from the vision in which, in sleep, he beheld the ladder that reached from earth to Heaven, and exclaiming: "This (place) is no other but the house of God and the gate of Heaven" (Gen. xxviii. 17).

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to understand the full significance of this beautiful invocation and of that which follows.

COMMENTARY.

This title is adopted from the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Genesis, wherein Jacob is described as beholding in his sleep "a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching Heaven; the Angels of God also ascending and descending by it"; and, later on, wakening up, he said: "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the house of God and the gate of Heaven."

1. *The Sacred Heart is, first, the* **House of God.**

The house is the family home, where father, and mother, and children live together on terms of the most loving and intimate affection; where all restraint is thrown aside; wherein the father finds his delight in the sweet caresses of his children, and the children love to gather round the father and lavish on him all the joyous love and tenderness of childhood. There are no secrets in the family home;

everything is held in common, and the father's greatest joy is in making his dear children happy, and bestowing on them all the treasures that he has. For them he toils ; they are in his thoughts both day and night ; he deems no sacrifice too great to make them happy and secure their welfare.

It is not hard to see how fully all this is realized in the Heart of our dear loving Father Jesus Christ. Is not that great Heart the House wherein His children love to dwell, wherein He makes it His delight to lavish on them all the choicest treasures that He has at His disposal ? " My delights," He tells, " are to be with the children of men " (Prov. viii. 31). Here He lays aside the majesty of God, the splendour of the heavenly court, and, full of the tenderest and sweetest love, converses as a Father with His beloved children, caressing them with all the tenderness of most paternal affection. " You are My friends," He says to the clients of His Sacred Heart ; " I will not now call you servants. . . . But I have called you friends " (John xv. 14, 15). " Amen, I say to you. If you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you. . . . Ask, and you shall receive : that your joy may be full " (John xvi. 23, 24). " For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me " (John xvi. 27). In this Divine Heart, as in a peaceful, happy home, the children find a refuge from the coldness, the wickedness, the persecution of the world without. Here they find tranquillity amid the storms that assail them. Here, in loving converse with their Father, they find a consolation that the world knows not of, a depth of peace and holy joy that words are

powerless to paint. "In peace in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest" (Ps. iv. 9). "Come to Me all ye that labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28). Hence it is the chosen office of the Sacred Heart to comfort the afflicted and console the sad of heart. His hands are ever full of precious gifts for those that come to Him as to a Father. His Heart is as a house of refuge, ever open to the sorrowing children of His love. To realize the truth of this in practice we need but turn to the pages in the monthly *Irish Messenger*, wherein are found recorded the endless favours He bestows with royal bounty on the clients of His Sacred Heart.

2. *The Sacred Heart is, too, the* **Gate of Heaven.**

On the mystical ladder of Jacob's dream Angels ascended and descended, as it were, escorting men from earth to Heaven; and at its summit stood the Lord God blessing the Patriarch and his descendants, and saying to him: "I will be thy keeper whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee back into this land" (Gen. xxviii. 15). This was a promise of future entrance into the heavenly country. In the Sacred Heart we have, in truth, a mystic ladder up which we may ascend to our celestial home. It is, indeed, for us a *Gate of Heaven*.

MEDITATION.

Two Keys to the Sacred Heart.

There are *two keys* wherewith to open this sacred gate:

1. **Humility.**—The first key is *humility*. A Saint was once invited by Our Lord to make her dwelling

in His Sacred Heart. She saw that the entrance was extremely small. "How comes it, O Lord," she asked, "that Thy Divine Heart is so very vast, and yet the entrance is so narrow?" And Our Lord informed her that it was because only those can enter who are small—that is to say, humble in their own eyes. To Blessed Margaret Mary He once said: "I will render you so poor, so vile, so abject, in your own eyes; I will so completely annihilate you in your own imagination, that you will be able to substitute Me in the place of your own nothingness." "Learn of Me," He says to each of us, "because I am meek and *humble* of heart."

2. **Purity of Heart.**—The second key is *purity of heart.* To gain an entrance into this Heart of infinite sanctity we must cultivate great purity of heart. Nothing is so unspeakably repugnant to the Sacred Heart as sin. A spiritual writer calls the Sacred Heart "the asylum of pure souls, a retreat for chaste hearts; in it the snow-white lilies, the resplendent ornament of virgin souls, diffuse their sweetest perfume." As of old, the dove, sent forth upon the flood by Noe, finding no footing on the floating masses of corruption round about, returned to the ark for shelter, so do those who shrink from contact with the world of sin find a refuge and a home within the Sacred Heart.

EIGHTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, GLOWING FURNACE OF CHARITY.

COMMENTARY

In the following four titles the boundless love and charity of the Sacred Heart are put before us for consideration. In the present title It is invoked as a "glowing Furnace of Charity." No stronger metaphor could be used to show the intensity of the love that, like the fire in a "glowing furnace," burns within the Heart of Jesus. We see the Sacred Heart usually represented, as Our Lord Himself showed It to Blessed Margaret Mary, with flames bursting forth and radiating heat on every side. In her first great vision Our Lord said to His devout servant: "My Heart is so inflamed with love for men . . . that, not being able to contain within Itself the *flames* of Its ardent charity, It must needs spread them abroad through means of thee." In the second vision she speaks of the Divine Heart as "a sun glowing with brilliant light," and she tells us of the "*flames* that burst forth . . . especially from His adorable Bosom, *which resembled a furnace.*" Again she tells us how, on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, "this Divine Heart was shown to me as on a throne *all of fire and flames*, emitting rays on all sides, and more dazzling than the noonday sun." Hence it is that in the Gospel Christ says to us: "I am come to *cast fire* on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke xii. 49).

Three flames of the most ardent love consume the great Heart of the Redeemer. The *first* flame or

manifestation of His love is the Incarnation itself : the gift of the Divine Word by Its union with our human nature : " God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son " (John iii. 16). The *second* is the work of Redemption accomplished by the labours, sufferings, and death of the Incarnate Word : " In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us " (1 John iii. 16). The *third* is the application of the merits of the Redemption to our souls : " That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting " (John iii. 16).

MEDITATION.

How to show our Love for the Sacred Heart.

Three practical thoughts for meditation suggest themselves in connection with this title :

1. **We should make a return of love for love** *to the Sacred Heart.* " He showed me," writes Blessed Margaret Mary, " that it was the great desire He had to be perfectly loved by men that had made Him form the design of manifesting to them His Divine Heart . . . in order that those who should desire to render Him and procure for Him all the love and honour possible might themselves be enriched with the profusion of those Divine treasures of which His Heart is the source." Moreover, she was told by Our Lord that " this devotion was the last effort of His love in these latter ages . . . to induce men to love Him and to love Him tenderly." It is a mystery we shall never understand until we " cross the

bar," if even then, how Christ should so eagerly desire our love. The least that we can do is to try our very best to love Him in return " with our whole heart and with our whole soul, with all our strength and with all our mind."

2. **We should bring others to know and love Him.** " He that hath no zeal hath no love," says St. Augustine. " Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, and it shall never be effaced," was the promise of Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary ; and He promises to priests who endeavour to promote devotion to His Sacred Heart that they shall have " power to touch the hardest hearts." The test and proof of love, says St. Ignatius, is to be found in *working* for the beloved. " Love consists," he says, " rather in works than in mere words." If our love for the Sacred Heart is *real*, we must show it practically by endeavouring to kindle in all hearts that flame of Divine love which He came to kindle here on earth.

3. **Lastly, we should seek most precious treasures and graces** *in the Sacred Heart.* " I promise also," were His words to Blessed Margaret Mary, " that My Heart will dilate Itself to pour forth in abundance the influence of Its Divine love on all those who shall render and procure for It this honour." And He promises to bestow on the clients of His Sacred Heart " all the treasures of love, mercy, grace, sanctification, and salvation that it contains." We have only to read what are called the *Promises of the Sacred Heart* to be convinced that It is a very treasure-house of wondrous blessings. Every month

the *Irish Messenger* contains a record of almost innumerable favours granted to the clients of this Divine Heart. All this should make us have recourse to It with boundless confidence and love.

NINTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, VESSEL OF JUSTICE AND LOVE.

1st Prelude.—Behold the Redeemer prostrate on the ground in agony beneath the olives of Gethsemani, His Sacred Heart all torn with anguish for the sins of men.

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to understand the marvellous significance of the title that is the subject of this meditation.

COMMENTARY.

In this title there is question only of the Sacred Humanity of Christ. It alone could be described as a receptacle or *vessel*. In the Divinity all perfection is infinite and essential to the Divine essence. The peculiarity of this title is that it brings together two apparently opposite and conflicting attributes. It is hard to conceive any two things more opposed to each other than are *justice* and *love*. Yet precisely in this circumstance is to be found the peculiar and wonderful beauty of this title. The words "justice and love" may have many meanings. In its Scripture acceptation—as, for instance, where we are told that St. Joseph was a *just* man—the word "just" often implies the *possession of all virtues in a supreme degree*. Taken in this sense, the title would mean that the human Heart of the Redeemer was

the home of every possible virtue existing in its highest possible degree.

Again, "justice" is often used as synonymous with *sanctifying grace* and all the unspeakable treasures of charity that it connotes. In this sense the invocation means that the Sacred Heart, as being the physical centre of Christ's Sacred Humanity, was, in the words of St. John, literally and absolutely "full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). In both these acceptations the invocation points to the exquisite spiritual beauty and perfection of the created human Heart of Christ.

Yet in neither of these senses do we seem to reach the real meaning intended in this title. The words we are considering convey a thought that is far more wonderful, profound, and full of mystery than appears at first sight. The word "vessel," used in connection with such opposite and even contradictory attributes as "justice" and "love," seems to point to some mysterious perfection, some wondrous combination, some very glorious prerogative, hidden deep within the fathomless recesses of the Sacred Heart. This I shall endeavour to explain.

In the first place, Christ in His Sacred Humanity took on Himself the office of Redeemer of the human race. He made Himself our Elder Brother, our representative before His Eternal Father, took on Himself the burden of our sins as though they were His own, and offered Himself as an adequate Oblation of atonement for them all. Hence in His Sacred Humanity He manifests in a supreme degree, and at the same time, both the justice and the love of His Eternal Father. He manifests in His own

Person the justice that exacts a satisfaction full and adequate, such as He alone could make, for sin. He feels the awful weight of His Eternal Father's indignation as He lies in agony beneath the olives in the Garden, as He stands a bleeding Victim at the pillar, as He wears the thorny crown, or sinks beneath the cruel Cross, or hangs in torture and dies upon it at the last. Throughout the Passion the torn, tortured Heart of the Redeemer was in very truth the Victim and "Vessel" of His Eternal Father's *justice*. Still more did It manifest His *love* —the love that would sacrifice the Son to grant an undeserved remission of the sins of men; the love that, at such a cruel cost, would free men from the devil's yoke and make them sons and heirs of God and co-heirs of an everlasting kingdom. It is clear to see how, in this sense, the Heart of Jesus is the "Vessel of justice and of love."

Yet more; in that deadly battle in the Garden, when the poor, shrinking human Nature of the Man-God, plunged amid a sea of agony and dread, cried aloud, in accents of entreaty, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away," the noble, royal Heart of Jesus, rising strong and powerful above Its human shrinking, spoke the words of "justice and love" combined—the words that doomed Him to an awful death, the fit expression of His everlasting love, no less than of the vigorous justice that exacted full atonement for our sins: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." This was the *fiat* of the Sacred Heart triumphing over the weakness of Its human Nature, that made It for evermore the "Vessel of justice and of love."

And ever as the ages pass along, there dwells within the lonely tabernacle on our altars One whose human Heart is still and always the "Vessel of justice and of love." Here, indeed, as the final effort of His boundless love, He offers Himself a ceaseless Victim of propitiation for our sins. Truly in the eucharistic Heart of Christ have love and justice met and formed a home for evermore. Daily, hourly, and every instant, in the Mass, the Sacred Heart is offered up a Victim of justice and of love to His Eternal Father.

MEDITATION.

The Spirit of Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

In our own lives we must endeavour to reproduce and imitate in some degree this double attribute of the Sacred Heart—His justice and His love. The first will engender within us a *spirit of reparation and penance;* the second will fill us with the *spirit of devotedness and love of suffering.*

1. **The Spirit of Reparation and Penance.**—How can we behold our Divine Master suffering such atrocious torments in His Passion and Death for each of us and not be urged ourselves to do something to atone for our own sins? St. Paul says He "loved *me* and delivered Himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20). Here we have the "justice and love" of the Sacred Heart handing It over to sufferings and to death that we may live. Will not the sight inspire us with something like a holy indignation against our wicked selves and urge us to share in some degree the penance that the Saviour did so

willingly for us ? Shall we not, too, as loving clients of the Heart of Christ, be anxious to make reparation not merely for our own sins, but also for the sins of others ? Or are we going, like the Apostles in the Garden, to leave Him lonely and abandoned in His hour of sorest need ? Shall we not rather " watch with Him and pray," and, like the Virgin Mother and St. John and Magdalen, be with Him as He expiates our sins and those of others on the Cross ?

2. **The Spirit of Devotedness and Love of Suffering.** —Love calls for a return of love. If the Heart of Jesus loved me and delivered Itself for love of me, the very least that I can do is to love and suffer somewhat in return. Speaking of the sanctity of love within the Sacred Heart, Blessed Margaret Mary writes : " This sanctity of love had kindled in my heart three desires : the desire of love to receive Him in the Eucharist, the desire to suffer, and the desire to die. . . . The more I suffered the better did I please this sanctity of love. . . . This sanctity of love so strongly urged me on to suffer in return that my sweetest consolation was to feel my body overwhelmed with suffering, my spirit drenched with sorrow, my entire being a prey to humiliation, contradiction and contempt." Teach me, then, O Sacred Heart, to be entirely devoted to Thy interests. Teach me to forget myself and seek but Thee alone. May my whole being ever be a holocaust consumed and offered up to Thee upon the burning altar of Thy love. Thus, immolated as a victim of reparation and devotedness, my self-love will disappear and be consumed within the burning furnace of Thy Sacred Heart.

TENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, FULL OF GOODNESS AND LOVE.

1st Prelude.—Behold Our Divine Lord going round among the villages and towns of Galilee "doing good and curing all."

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to realize the unspeakable kindness and love of the Heart of Jesus.

COMMENTARY.

According to St. Thomas (1., q. 20, a. 1, ad 3), to love anyone is, properly speaking, to wish him well. This well-wishing, when efficacious, shows itself exteriorly in acts of goodness. According to another saying of the same saintly Doctor, love tends to communicate itself—to multiply abroad the testimonies of its good-will. Judged by this test, we shall have little difficulty in showing how "full" the Sacred Heart is of "goodness," the external manifestation of Its overflowing "love."

1. In the *Parables* Our Lord Himself puts before us the most touching pictures of the "goodness and love" of His Sacred Heart. He represents Himself as the *Good Shepherd*, carrying home the lost sheep on His shoulders; as the *Good Samaritan*, pouring oil into the wounds of the poor, afflicted traveller; as the loving *Father of the Prodigal*, hurrying forth with open arms to welcome back the penitent.

2. In the *Acts of the Apostles* we are told how He "went about doing good and healing all" (Acts x. 38). The *Gospel* narrative is one unbroken history of His "goodness and love." He seems to have a

special predilection for the *wretched and afflicted*. The blind and the lame, the leprous and the paralyzed, gather round Him with instinctive confidence for help in their afflictions. For has He not proclaimed that "blessed are they that mourn"? Moved by a widow's tears, He gives her back her only son alive; He raises the dead Lazarus from the tomb at the piteous entreaty of his sisters. His love and goodness towards *children* are remarkable. He blesses and caresses them, and bids them to come to Him with boundless confidence. For *sinners* He has nothing but words of gentlest kindness. He undertakes a painful journey to win over a poor Samaritan woman. When everyone around would stone to death the wretched woman taken in adultery, He saves her and converts her with a word of love. And who shall tell the wonder of His dealings with the sinner Magdalen? Even the traitor Judas He addresses as His "friend," and uses every art to win him over, even to the very end.

3. And where can words be found to adequately picture the exquisite goodness and love of the *eucharistic Heart* of Jesus in the Tabernacle, or to tell of all the world of goodness with which He welcomes back the sinner in the *Sacrament of Penance?*

4. Whilst ever in His *heavenly home* He acts as Advocate and Mediator with His Father, warding off, with wealth of tenderness and power, the terrors of the Eternal Father's wrath about to fall upon the head of guilty man.

MEDITATION.

Charity in Thought, Word, and Deed.

We must try to imitate in some degree the charity and goodness of the Sacred Heart. This we may do—(1) in our *thoughts*; (2) in our *words*; (3) in our *actions*.

1. **In our Thoughts.**—Do we try to see the good rather than the evil in those around us—to fix our thoughts upon their good points rather than to dwell upon their weaknesses and faults? We ourselves have got our failings as well as our good qualities; we should like others to dwell upon the latter rather than the former. Are we guilty of rash judgments; do we attribute sinister motives; or do we try to judge of others' actions in the light of Christian charity and love?

2. **In our Words.**—Do we try not alone to think, but also to *speak* well of others, especially behind their backs? It is base and cowardly to say of another in his absence what we should never venture to assert before his face. Be tender of the reputation of your neighbour as you would wish him to be careful of your own. The best plan is to make it an inviolable rule never, if possible, to say a hard word of anyone. Then be kindly, courteous and considerate in your words to others.

3. **In our Actions.**—Negatively and positively—negatively, by never doing what would hurt or injure others; positively, by showing them all goodness

and consideration in our dealings with them. Furthermore, we must help our neighbour spiritually and temporally—we must assist the poor, the sick, the afflicted ; we must pray for the conversion of the sinner, and be full of tender pity for the suffering children of the Sacred Heart in Purgatory. Thus shall we imitate and become dear to Him Whose Heart is " full of goodness and of love."

ELEVENTH TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, ABYSS OF ALL VIRTUES.

1st Prelude.—Behold the Sacred Heart as a fathomless Abyss of love and mercy.

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to form some idea of the limitless perfections of the Sacred Heart.

COMMENTARY.

Touching this beautiful title, we may ask ourselves two questions : (1) In what sense do we attribute *all* virtues to the Sacred Heart ? (2) Why is It called an *Abyss* of all virtues ?

1. When we attribute *all* virtues to the Sacred Heart we mean all virtues compatible with the *perfection* of the Sacred Humanity of Christ. For in ordinary men certain virtues may exist which presuppose moral imperfection or even sin, and which would therefore be incompatible with the perfection of Christ's Sacred Humanity. Thus, for example, the virtue of penance, or grief for personal sin, would be inconsistent with the absolute holiness and sinlessness of the Redeemer. So also

for the theological virtues of *faith* and *hope*, the former of which, supposing as its object the *hidden* mysteries of religion, would be incompatible with the beatific vision enjoyed by the Man-God here on earth ; whilst the virtue of *hope*, in its strict sense, supposes the *non-possession* as yet of its proper object, whereas Christ was already in full possession of that object in the enjoyment of the beatific vision.

2. When we call the Sacred Heart an *Abyss* of all virtues, we mean that It contains in their highest possible plenitude all virtues possible for It to possess. Two reasons may be assigned why the Divine Heart of the Redeemer should be so endowed. *First*, these gifts are proportioned to the closeness of the union between God and man. In Christ this union was the closest possible—*i.e.*, the hypostatic union of the Divinity with the Humanity. *Secondly*, according to St. Thomas (3., q. 7, a. 9), the Sacred Humanity of the Redeemer was destined from the moment of the Incarnation to be the *cause and source of grace* for all mankind. Our Blessed Lady, indeed, was " full of grace," but the plenitude of grace in her was relative, not absolute. In the Sacred Heart all virtues exist, both as regards species and degree, in a manner that is *absolutely* supreme.

3. Again, viewed under another aspect, the metaphorical use of the word *Abyss* seems to have a twofold signification. *First*, it connotes that the perfections of the Sacred Heart entirely surpass the comprehension not only of men on earth, but even of the Saints and Angels. *Secondly*, that these perfections, though existing in the created, and there-

fore finite, human Nature of the Man-God, are nevertheless, in a certain sense, infinite. St. Thomas (*loc. cit.*) explains this by saying that God has granted to Christ's Sacred Humanity supernatural gifts and graces absolutely without measure or limit of any kind.

MEDITATION.

How to Imitate the Virtues of the Sacred Heart.

The most excellent exercise of devotion to the Sacred Heart consists in the imitation of Its virtues. It is, as we have seen, an *Abyss* of all virtues ; and nowhere do these virtues appeal to us more intimately or with more attractive power than in the Blessed Eucharist. Here we come face to face with them ; they appear, in a sense, before our very eyes, or come within the range of our exterior senses. Let us take a glance at some of them.

1. **A Life of Holiness, Detachment, Strength.**—The Sacred Heart in the Blessed Eucharist leads a life of *holiness*, of *detachment*, of *strength* amidst apparent weakness. It thereby preaches to us from the tabernacle hatred of sin and the cultivation of innocence of heart. It calls on us to withdraw, like It, from the inordinate love of the world and of exterior things, and teaches us to despise what the world loves and values, and to value and esteem what the world despises and condemns. It likewise calls us to be valiant and patient in the spiritual combat, and to realize, like St. Paul, that our strength consists in the humble confession of our weakness.

2. **A Life of Meekness, Humility, Self-Sacrifice.**—The Sacred Heart in the Blessed Eucharist leads a life of *meekness*, of *humility*, of *recollection*, of *self-sacrifice*. It is not inflamed to anger, nor does It ever avenge the insults and the outrages often offered to It. It hides the splendours of the Divinity beneath the lowly eucharistic veils. It lives a life of perpetual and closest union with the Heavenly Father, wrapt in ecstasies of endless praise and prayer to God. It immolates Itself as a perpetual victim for the sins of men. In all these things It offers the most perfect and attractive model for our imitation.

3. **A Life of Interior Peace.**—The eucharistic Heart of Christ is a model of *interior peace*. Amid the noise and turmoil of the world around, amid the outrages and insults, or at least neglect, with which It meets so often, Its peace is never ruffled. It dwells in everlasting calm. It thereby teaches us not to lose our peace of mind amid the noise, the anxieties, the untoward events of life.

Prayer of St. Gertrude to the Sacred Heart.

The following beautiful prayer of St. Gertrude is very applicable to the present Meditation :

" Sanctity of the Heart of Jesus, consecrate my heart ; providence of the Heart of Jesus, watch over my heart ; unchangeableness of the Heart of Jesus, strengthen my heart ; purity of the Heart of Jesus, purify my heart ; obedience of the Heart of Jesus, subjugate my heart ; amiability of the Heart of Jesus, make Thyself known to my heart ; Divine attractions of the Heart of Jesus, captivate my

heart ; riches of the Heart of Jesus, do ye suffice for my heart ; floods of grace and blessing that flow from the Heart of Jesus, inundate my heart. O Heart of Jesus ! be Thou my joy, my peace, my repose in this world and in the next. O Heart of Jesus ! adored in Heaven, invoked on earth, feared in Hell, reign over all hearts, reign throughout all ages, reign for ever in celestial glory. Amen."

TWELFTH TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, MOST WORTHY OF ALL PRAISE.

1st Prelude.—Imagine you hear the voices of the thousands of Angels, as described in the Apocalypse (v. 12), saying : " The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and Divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction. . . . To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honour and glory and power for ever and ever."

2nd Prelude.—Pray that the Sacred Heart may ever be praised and honoured by all creatures.

COMMENTARY.

We now enter on the consideration of a series of titles that regard the devotion to the Sacred Heart considered rather in *itself* than in its object—considered, that is to say, in the acts which constitute this devotion. The present title tells us that the Sacred Heart is worthy of all praise. This is the natural and necessary consequence of Its attributes, which have been pointed out in the preceding titles.

1. Praise, in its general sense, means honour

shown. In a more restricted sense it means the expression, especially in speech, of the esteem we feel for any person or thing. Now, the Sacred Heart, by reason of Its substantial union with the uncreated Word of God, is absolutely worthy of *all* possible praise and honour—in other words, of the supreme worship of adoration due to the Divinity alone. The smallness of the creature, however exalted, is but a dim reflection of the essential excellence of the Creator. God alone—the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word—is, above, and apart from, all else, absolutely worthy of *all* possible praise.

2. In addition to the supreme homage of our adoration, we render to the Sacred Heart the homage of other acts of virtue. Foremost among these is *love*. Of this we shall treat in the magnificent and comprehensive invocation that follows. Next comes *obedience*. Obedience is the test and proof of love: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John xiv. 15). "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them: he it is that loveth Me" (*ibid.* 21). This obedience has its degrees. The *first* consists in keeping the Commandments; the *second* is found in the observance of the Evangelical Counsels; the *third* consists in prompt and docile obedience to God's holy inspirations and interior graces. "My heart watcheth the voice of my Beloved knocking" (Cant. v. 2), to open to Him on the spot and make Him Master of my home—that is, of my entire self—and to exclude from thence all that may in any way displease Him.

3. As a natural consequence of this homage of obedience will follow the homage of *imitation*. "For

whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5). The praise and homage that the Sacred Heart especially demands of us is the imitation, in our own poor, weak, imperfect way, of His virtues. Without this, mere lip praise is of little value in His sight.

4. In addition to all this, we must pay to the Sacred Heart the praise and homage of *prayer and pious exercises.* This we do when we devoutly celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart, when we go to Communion and assist at Mass and Benediction in Its honour on First Fridays, when we recite the Litany, the acts of consecration or of reparation, and other prayers or pious ejaculations to the Sacred Heart. To join Confraternities and Associations of the Sacred Heart, such as that of the Apostleship of Prayer, is to enrol ourselves in the great army of the Sacred Heart. The scapular, the badge, the medal of the Sacred Heart are exterior symbols of our membership of this great army; they are the livery that marks us out as soldiers and apostles of our Heavenly King.

5. Lastly, we must learn to *know* the Sacred Heart; we must *study* Its perfections and Its attributes. St. Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* bids us pray that we may *know* Our Lord; that from knowing Him we may *love* Him, and from loving Him may come to *imitate* Him. Our devotion to the Sacred Heart, in order to be deep and solid, must have its foundations in the intellect. When that is once enlightened, the homage and devotion

of the will and the affections will be sure to follow—we shall learn to love and then to imitate the Sacred Heart.

MEDITATION.

Our Homage to the Sacred Heart.

Adoration, Obedience, Imitation, Prayer—these are four ways in which we offer a practical homage of praise to the Sacred Heart.

1. **Adoration.**—The Sacred Heart is in the tabernacle. Do we realize that fact when we enter the church and genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament? That genuflection is an act of adoration to the Sacred Heart. When we receive Communion do we reflect that the Sacred Heart rests upon our tongue and in our bosom? Do we profoundly adore and reverence It, present as It really is within us at that precious moment? How wonderfully close we are to the Sacred Heart! How marvellously intimate and constant are the relations we have with It each day! Let us learn to act with profoundest adoration and reverence in this Divine Presence.

2. **Obedience.**—Do we cultivate conformity to the Divine Will in all the untoward events of life? It is the secret of interior peace. Do we diligently endeavour to correspond with the many precious graces and holy inspirations we receive from that loving Heart, the very source and never-failing fountain of all grace? "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "Lord, what would Thou have me to do?" Behold, I am as wax in Thy Divine

hands, or as clay in the hands of the potter; mould and fashion me after the model of Thine own most perfect Heart, guide and guard my erring footsteps, lest I leave Thee and be lost.

3. **Imitation.**—"Learn of Me," says Christ, "for I am meek and humble of Heart." In the profound abysses of the Heart of Christ we behold the most exalted model of all virtues. He directs our attention to two in particular. Meekness and humility, the opposites of anger and pride, are the characteristic virtues He would have us practise as the clients of the Sacred Heart. With these two virtues, charity and the rest are ours.

4. **Prayer.**—This includes not merely vocal prayer and the various exterior exercises of devotion to the Sacred Heart already mentioned, but also the endeavour that we make by mental prayer and meditation to acquire an interior, intellectual knowledge of the Sacred Heart and to study Its perfections and peculiar attributes. From this study we gradually acquire an intimate and personal acquaintance with Our Lord; we begin to acquire and appreciate His Spirit and to grow into resemblance to Him. This is sanctity, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29).

THIRTEENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, KING AND CENTRE OF ALL HEARTS.

1st Prelude.—Behold Jesus Christ saying: "All power is given to Me, in Heaven and on earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to understand on how many grounds the Sacred Heart is King and Centre of all hearts.

COMMENTARY.

This title comprises two distinct invocations. The Sacred Heart is invoked as (1) King of all hearts; (2) Centre of all hearts. Let us consider each invocation separately.

I. King of all Hearts.

1. The Sacred Heart is the King of all hearts—*de jure*, in justice and by right, but, alas! not *de facto*, not in point of fact. Of this Our Lord Himself complained to Blessed Margaret Mary in the following touching words: "Behold this Heart which has loved men so much that It has spared nothing, even so far as to exhaust and consume Itself, in order to testify Its love for them; and in return I receive from the greater number nothing but ingratitude, irreverence, and sacrilege."

The royalty of the Divine Heart of Christ rests upon a twofold basis. It is "King of all hearts" by right of *birth* and by right of *conquest*. The first refers us to the personality of the Son of God, whereby, in His Divine Nature as God and by virtue of the hypostatic union, He is the Sovereign Lord and Master of all hearts. The second places before

us the Man-God coming down on earth to rescue fallen man from the slavery of Satan, and by the labours and sufferings of His Life, and Passion, and Death, to win a glorious victory for us over sin and Hell. "He loved me and delivered Himself for me," says St. Paul (Gal. ii. 20). We are the fruits of this conquest, and as such we are the subjects of this "King of Glory," and He is the King and Master of all human hearts.

By virtue of this double royalty we must distinguish a twofold regal authority in Christ, calling on our part for the exercise of two classes of duties towards the Sacred Heart. There is, first, the authority of the *Divine Majesty* in Christ, which calls for reverential fear and adoration, and the entire subjection and consecration of our hearts to Him. Then there is the authority He possesses over us as our *Redeemer*, calling for a return of love for love, of service for service, of suffering, toil, and sacrifice for the suffering, toil, and sacrifice which He endured for us on earth. The first arises from the law of fear, the second from the law of love. The first recalls the spirit of the Old Law, the second tells us of the new and higher Law of Love whereby we are no longer merely servants, but friends—nay, even sons of the Most High. "I will not now call you servants. . . . But I have called you friends" (John xv. 15). "We are now the sons of God" (1 John iii. 2). This is pre-eminently the spirit of the Sacred Heart, the spirit and the law of *love*. Hence, too, it is that the royalty of Christ Our Lord is in a special way attributed to His *Heart*, the symbol and the instrument of His superabounding and all-consuming love.

2. Royalty connotes not merely supreme *authority*, but also sovereign *power—i.e.*, the means to put that authority efficaciously in force. "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth," says Christ (Matt. xxviii. 18). As God He is omnipotent; as Man He has received from His Eternal Father power to make and to promulgate laws, to judge and recompense or punish men. The Father, He tells us, "hath given all judgment to the Son. That all may honour the Son, as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23). "He hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of man" (*ibid.* 27). At the day of general judgment this sovereign power of Christ will manifest itself to men with striking and tremendous majesty and force; nay, every instant it is being revealed to those who die.

Now, this power of efficaciously insuring the observance of His laws and of His Will is nothing else than the *power to distribute graces*, whereby, without coercing or in any way doing violence to man's free-will, He reigns as King in the hearts and lives of us His creatures. In this sense the Heart of Jesus is in truth the "King of all hearts."

3. This consideration brings us into contact with one of the most beautiful, one of the most deeply interesting, consoling, and encouraging phases of devotion to the Sacred Heart. It opens up a truly fascinating horizon of thought. It gives us a glimpse into the sources of the marvellous—I should, perhaps, call it miraculous—efficacy of this devotion. It enables us, in some degree at least, to solve the riddle how it is that devotion to the Sacred Heart does work at times such wonders. I

will try as best I may to introduce to you one of the greatest and most wonderful secrets of the Sacred Heart—the secret of Its action on the souls of those who earnestly and honestly endeavour to serve and worship It.

The salvation and sanctification of the soul are the result of God's grace and our own co-operation. Grace is the free gift of His goodness. God never does violence to the will; He never robs us of our freedom. At the same time He can always give the soul a grace such that the will will no longer resist it, but will, of its perfectly free and unfettered action, accept and co-operate with it. God foresees what degree of strength of grace is necessary to thus win the free consent of the will. Such a grace is styled, with reference to the attaining of its object, an efficacious grace. Thus God can, in His omnipotence, always secure the salvation of an individual soul without in any way interfering with its free-will. Neither by virtue of His mercy nor His justice is He (to use a word which cannot properly be used in speaking of God) *bound* to give such efficacious grace. It is the pure effect of His infinite goodness. Thus, all hearts are in His hands: "As the divisions of the waters so the heart of the King is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it" (Prov. xxi. 1). His Will is omnipotent: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done" (Ps. cxxxiv. 6). Hence, in the spiritual order, He may, if He chooses, give a grace that nothing will frustrate or resist. In this sense the Church prays in its Liturgy: "Rebelles nostras etiam *compelle* voluntates" (*Force* our rebellious wills to Thee).

It would take too long to show how, from the writings of the Blessed Margaret Mary and the experience of the just, there is reason to infer that to those who faithfully and earnestly practise devotion to His Sacred Heart Christ gives from the store-house of His graces—those that He foresees will prove efficacious in winning the salvation and sanctification of these devoted clients of His Sacred Heart. Such persons seem to stand, in a manner, outside the ordinary providence of God, and as very intimate and special friends of Christ to become the objects of His special predilection, of a very special dispensation on His part.

MEDITATION.

The Kingdom of the Sacred Heart.

In this world the reign of the Sacred Heart, as "King of all hearts," is fourfold: in the *individual*, in the *family*, in the *state*, in the *entire world*.

1. **In the Individual Soul** Christ reigns as King when its entire being is devoted to His service, when He is the chief and primary object of its love. Its every thought, and word, and action, its sufferings and its toils, are all for Him—at least, habitually. This is the idea of the "morning offering." In a word, the whole composite, both body and soul, that constitutes the human being, is, by the solemn act of the will, dedicated in a special manner to His service.

2. **In the Family.**—Jesus longs especially to reign within the family circle, thereby to load its members

with the superabundant and all-powerful graces and blessings of His Sacred Heart. To this end it might be well, if possible, first, to make a solemn act of consecration of the family to the Sacred Heart, renewing it in each recurring June; second, to have a picture of the Sacred Heart exposed and honoured in the home. Blessed Margaret Mary assures us (Letter 126) that Our Lord Himself desired that the image of His Sacred Heart should be exposed and venerated in the home. "I will bless those homes in which the image of My Sacred Heart shall be exposed and honoured." All this, of course, also applies to the religious community or family.

3. **In the State.**—The Divine message sent through Blessed Margaret Mary to King Louis XIV. of France is well known. Had the King but acted on it, the latter-day history of this nation might be different from what it is to-day. Nations suffer like individuals from the rejection of God's grace. Many Catholic Sovereigns have consecrated their kingdoms to the Sacred Heart. Perhaps the most notable example is that of the present Emperor of Austria, who, on June 11, 1900, surrounded by six Archdukes and Archduchesses, the heads of the ecclesiastical, civil, and military administration, and the members of his Court, consecrated his kingdom to the Sacred Heart, before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, in the Cathedral of his capital city of Vienna. To-day, in the autumn of his long and prosperous reign—the longest of any European ruler—the Austrian Emperor is among the most respected and beloved of the Sovereigns of Europe.

4. **In the Entire World.**—One of the last acts of the great Pontiff Leo XIII. was to consecrate the *whole world* to the Sacred Heart. "In the early ages of the Church," wrote the Pope, "a young Emperor beheld in the heavens a cross, the herald of a magnificent and speedily approaching victory. To-day, behold another emblem, sacred and Divine, appears before our eyes. It is the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, with the Cross above It, glowing in the midst of flames. In It let us place all our hopes; to It let us look for the salvation of the human race."

Sacred Heart of Jesus, King and Centre of all hearts, reign over us, and make us Thine, and Thine alone, for evermore.

THIRTEENTH TITLE (*continued*): HEART OF JESUS, KING AND CENTRE OF ALL HEARTS.

1st Prelude.—Imagine you see Christ pointing to His Divine Heart, and saying, "Behold this Heart which has loved men so much."

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to understand, in some sort, the boundless love of the Sacred Heart for you, and to love It with your whole heart in return.

COMMENTARY.

In the last meditation we reflected on the Sacred Heart as the *King* of all hearts; we now take up the second portion of the title:

II. Centre of all Hearts.

Three qualities which the Sacred Heart possesses in a supereminent degree entitle It to such love on

our part as would truly render It the *Centre of all hearts*—namely, Its *beauty*, Its *goodness*, and Its *love*.

1. **The Beauty of the Sacred Heart.**—All the exquisite beauty of Nature which we see around us in the inanimate and the animate creation is at most but a dim reflection of the uncreated beauty of the Godhead. We admire beautiful scenery, where mountain and valley, lake and river, vie with each other in all the varied loveliness of Nature ; we look with mingled feelings of delight and awe on the ever-varying moods and phases of the changeful sea ; the gorgeous shapes and colours and the delicate perfume of the flowers have a striking charm for many amongst us ; we gaze in awesome wonder at the stars ; the endless marvels of the animate world of fish and insect, bird and beast, wellnigh bewilder us ; above all, the physical, intellectual, or moral beauty of creation's lord, our fellow-being, wrings from us, despite ourselves, the tribute of our homage. Immeasurably more beautiful, more noble, more deserving of our admiration and our love than all or any of these, rising wellnigh infinitely above and beyond them all, there is one Object. That Object is the human Heart of the Redeemer. It is far and away the loveliest Object in God's vast creation, not excepting even the Blessed Mother of God herself. " The Sacred Heart of Jesus," says Père Le Roy, " is the symbol and living copy of all the Divine perfections of the Incarnate Word, the résumé of all Its human perfections, the living centre of all virtues." Surely such resplendent

beauty cannot fail to draw to It the warmest love and admiration of our hearts.

2. **The Goodness of the Sacred Heart.**—Next to Its exquisite and perfect beauty come the *kindness and goodness* of the Sacred Heart. We naturally feel drawn towards those who are good and kind to us. This quality attracts us even more than beauty. A generous and kindly nature wins a host of friends. Now, the Sacred Heart is the source, the centre, and the symbol of the boundless generosity and goodness of the Saviour. To the Heart of Jesus may be traced the gentleness and mercy that, in an instant, forgave the Magdalen a life of sin, the tenderness and pity that dried the widow's tears at Naim and gave her back her son alive and well, the thoughtful care that fed with a few loaves and fishes the hungry thousands that had followed Him into the desert—in short, the deep and tender sympathy with human suffering that made the Saviour multiply His miracles beyond all counting to relieve all forms of human misery and woe. He "went about doing good and healing all" (Acts x. 38). What the Heart of Jesus was throughout the years He lived and toiled with us on earth It still is, and even more, in Its eucharistic presence in our midst. The monthly record of thanksgivings in the *Irish Messenger* for favours granted is but one of many testimonies of this. Why should not so many and such wondrous proofs of goodness win our tenderest and most devoted love?

3. **The Unbounded Love of the Sacred Heart.**—To Its beauty and Its goodness we have yet to add the

highest claim of all that the Sacred Heart possesses on our love—namely, *Its own unbounded love for us*, which calls aloud for a return of love. The love of the Heart of Jesus is at the same time human and Divine. "The human love of Christ," says Père Le Roy, "is a love the most intense, the most disinterested, the most devoted—in a word, in all respects the most perfect we can possibly imagine; it manifests itself by proofs the strongest, the most touching, the most lasting, that can be conceived." If we have eyes to see or heart to feel we cannot be blind or insensible to such devoted love as this. "Who would not love in return One Who loves us so much?" asks St. Bernard. Love can only be repaid by a return of love. If we withhold our love, all other offerings are of no avail. The Heart of Jesus claims the homage of our love; It claims to be in very deed *the Centre of all hearts*. We may end this point with the beautiful thought of the Evangelist St. John: "Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us" (1 John iv. 19).

MEDITATION.

The Kinds of Divine Love.

To these three qualities of the Sacred Heart—Its beauty, Its goodness, and Its love—correspond three kinds of love which we should render to It in return, if It is to be in truth the "Centre" of our hearts. We should love the Sacred Heart with (1) the love of *complaisance*, (2) the love of *benevolence*, (3) the love of *zeal*.

1. **The Love of Complaisance.**—Complaisance is the beginning of love. It implies appreciation, approval, admiration of the beauty, goodness, or perfection of the object that solicits our affection. Never can we sufficiently appreciate, approve of, or admire the exquisite beauty and perfection of the Sacred Heart. We must beg Our Lord to enable us to direct to Him and to His Sacred Heart alone the entire complaisance of our souls, to study and meditate on His perfections, and never to permit that the beauty of created objects should steal from Him the love we should give to Him alone. "If anyone love not Our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" are the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 22).

2. **The Love of Benevolence.**—This consists in wishing to the Sacred Heart all the glory and service that can possibly be rendered to It, rejoicing at Its happiness, Its splendour, Its perfections; grieving at the coldness and indifference of men in Its regard, the outrages they offer It, the sins that so offend and wound It; striving to procure It an increase of accidental glory; toiling to promote Its honour, to advance Its interests; consecrating to Its service all our energies, our thoughts, our words, our actions, and our sufferings—in a word, our entire life and all our being. To this love of benevolence belongs the task of making reparation to the Sacred Heart for our own sins and those of others; the task, too, of thanking It for all Its endless benefits and goodness. O Heart of Jesus, Centre of all hearts, "Thou art not known, Thou art not loved." "My eyes have sent forth springs of water: because they have not kept Thy law" (Ps. cxviii. 136).

3. **The Love of Zeal.**—" Qui non zelat non amat—He who hath no zeal hath no love." " Love shows itself in works," says St. Ignatius. If we really love the Sacred Heart our love will be a fire of zeal that will urge us, night and day, to spend ourselves in working for Our Lord. We shall esteem no sacrifice too great, no effort too laborious or prolonged, to spread abroad the love and knowledge of the Sacred Heart. This will be the passion of our lives, the dream of our existence, the goal of our endeavours. " I am come to cast fire on the earth ; and what will I but that it be kindled ?" (Luke xii. 49). This Divine fire will never give us rest by day or night until we have helped to kindle it in other souls, and are ourselves consumed with it in Heaven.

FOURTEENTH TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, IN WHICH ARE ALL THE TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.

1st Prelude.—Behold St. Paul writing the words : " In Whom (Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge " (Col. ii. 3).

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to understand in some degree the depths of knowledge and wisdom that are contained in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

COMMENTARY.

The three following invocations of the Litany are taken from the Scripture. They set forth the riches conferred on the Sacred Heart by the Eternal Father, the fulness of the Godhead of which It is

possessed, and the supreme complaisance with which God the Father contemplates Its exquisite perfections. Thus these invocations supply further reasons why the Sacred Heart should be, as we have seen, the " King and Centre of all hearts." Hence their position in the list of invocations.

1. These " treasures of wisdom and knowledge " may refer either, *first*, to the *Divine perfections* of the Word, existing in the human Nature of Christ, just as we are told in the following invocation that the " fulness of the Godhead exists in Christ ; or, *second*, they may refer to the *created perfections* that are formally belonging to the human Nature of the Word made Flesh. In its strictest sense the phrase " *all* the treasures " would seem, indeed, to confine the invocation to the *Divine perfections* alone, since *all* the degrees of perfection are found really united in the infinite perfections of God alone.

Wisdom and knowledge are, according to St. Thomas, distinguishable in this, that Wisdom signifies the knowing of all that is in God, whilst knowledge signifies the knowing of all that is in creatures. St. Paul uses the word *treasures* in the sense in which the Wise Man speaks of Wisdom as " an infinite *treasure* to men " (Wisd. vii. 14).

In a philosophical and human sense we distinguish between wisdom and knowledge : a learned man is one who is erudite, possessed of the knowledge of many facts ; a wise man is one who knows how to *apply* his knowledge practically for the better guidance of his own life or that of others.

In its theological sense wisdom belongs not merely to the understanding, but also to the will, which

regulates its acts under the light and guidance of the understanding.

Now, the Word made Flesh, the Sacred Heart, being in all things equal to His Father, possesses all the infinite treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are in the Father.

2. If we inquire what is the extent of the *created* wisdom and knowledge of Christ's human Soul, it may be answered that it is of an absolutely perfect kind, excluding all ignorance, which would be an imperfection ; that Christ in His human Nature possessed the beatific vision, and this, too, by virtue of the hypostatic union, in a far higher and more intimate and perfect way than any creature, angel, or elect of men ; that, according to St. Thomas, He communicates this vision to all the elect, and that to this perfect vision of God was added a perfect knowledge of all that is, has been, or ever will exist, outside of God.

As regards purely *experimental* knowledge—*i.e.*, such as results from the immediate action of the senses, Christ as Man was subject to the limitations of all human nature. In this sense " Jesus advanced in *wisdom* and age " (Luke ii. 52).

3. It is very interesting and beautiful to trace the gradual manifestation of this spirit of wisdom in the life of Christ. Even at the age of twelve the doctors in the Temple " were astonished at His wisdom and His answers " (Luke ii. 47). When first He spoke in public in the synagogue at Nazareth the people " wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from His mouth " (Luke iv. 22) ; and by the lake shore of Galilee, seeing the marvellous miracles

He wrought, " they wondered, saying : He hath done all things well ; He hath made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak " (Mark vii. 37). But it was, above all, when the end drew near that Jesus showed more manifestly the marvels of His heavenly wisdom : in the Garden, in His Passion, on the Cross ; in the institution of the Church, the Mass, the Sacraments—especially the Blessed Eucharist—the promise of the Holy Ghost, the gradual strengthening of the Apostles for the mighty work that lay before them—in these and many other ways shine forth, in dazzling splendour, the incomprehensible treasure of wisdom and of knowledge hidden in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

MEDITATION.

The Wisdom of the Saints.

There are two kinds of wisdom : the wisdom of Heaven and the wisdom of this earth. The one teaches us to value God and the things of God above all merely earthly interests, to despise and reject whatever stands between us and God's service. The other is, in the vigorous language of St. James, " earthly, sensual, devilish " (Jas. iii. 15) : *earthly*, because its hopes and aspirations are of this earth alone ; *sensual*, because it is guided by the desires of the flesh and of the senses ; *devilish*, because its inspirations are from Hell. This is the wisdom of the world and of those—how numerous, alas !—who journey by the broad and pleasant road that leads to everlasting death.

To the Sacred Heart of Him Who is " the Way,

the Truth, and the Life" we must go to learn the wisdom of the Saints of God. True wisdom teaches us (1) to seek before all things God's glory and our own salvation; (2) to choose the means most suitable to the attainment of these ends, to the exclusion of whatsoever would impede us, however pleasant or attractive in itself; (3) to use these means with vigour, perseverance, and determination, undeterred by any obstacle.

1. **True Wisdom teaches us to seek the Things of God above all else.**—It tells us that to praise, to reverence, and serve God and save our souls is the primary end and object of our being; that for this end we were created, and that to the attainment of this end should be devoted all our energies of soul and body. Are our principles correct in this regard? Are we profoundly and practically convinced of the emptiness and folly of all that does not lead, in some degree, to God and heavenly bliss?

2. **True Wisdom teaches us to use the Means that lead to this, to the Exclusion of all else.**—There are many who believe the truths of faith, that their one great business here on earth is to serve God and save their souls, and yet who live almost entirely for this world and take no pains to earn Heaven or escape from Hell. They neglect the means of salvation that God has put at their disposal. They do not pray; they do not turn to the Sacraments for strength and help; they live in sin; they love the world; they do nothing to secure salvation, and their end is everlasting death. Oh, let us pray that heavenly wisdom be our guide to lead us sweetly,

gently, irresistibly along the path to Heaven. That wisdom is the priceless treasure granted to the loving clients of the Sacred Heart.

3. **True Wisdom teaches us to use the Means of Salvation with Vigour, Perseverance, and Determination.**—This is the characteristic of the fervent soul, the soul that knows and loves the Sacred Heart. One of the choicest graces granted to the clients of the Sacred Heart is the grace to make a fervent, vigorous, and constant use of the means of salvation. In two of the "Promises" of the Sacred Heart we are told that "the tepid will become fervent," and that "the fervent will speedily rise to high perfection." What else is this but a promise of true heavenly wisdom to the genuine clients of the Sacred Heart?

FIFTEENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, IN WHICH DWELLS ALL THE FULNESS OF THE DIVINITY.

1st Prelude.—Behold St. Paul writing the words: "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally" (Col. ii. 9).

2nd Prelude.—Ask the gift of intimate union with God by sanctifying grace.

COMMENTARY.

1. In former titles of this Litany we learned that the Sacred Heart is the abode of justice, full of kindness, full of love, an abyss of all virtues, deserving of all praise, full of wisdom and of knowledge. In this title comes at last the climax and, so to

speak, the summary of all Its marvellous perfections, in the "fulness of the Divinity." Than this no higher eulogium can be passed on the Divine Heart of the Redeemer.

2. We must be accurate in our ideas respecting the nature and meaning of the hypostatic union. It does not mean the indwelling of the Word within the Man Jesus, as of one distinct Person dwelling within another, so that there are two Persons, as the Nestorians maintained; nor does it mean the confusion of the two natures into one, as the Monophysites asserted. There is only one Person—the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity—to which are united two distinct natures, the Human Nature and the Divine Nature. In other words, the Human Nature of Jesus has been adopted by the Divine Personality of the Eternal Word, which so sustains and rules It that It has never existed, and never can exist, apart from the Word. That Divine Word was united from all eternity with the Divine Nature; Its union with the Human Nature began at the moment of the Incarnation. All this clearly applies, and, for certain reasons, even in an especial manner, to the Sacred Heart, which is an essential and integral portion of the Sacred Humanity of Christ.

3. In another and subordinate sense the "fulness of the Divinity" may be said to dwell within the Sacred Heart—in the sense, namely, that Jesus in His Human Nature was always possessed in a supreme degree of sanctifying grace. In the ninth and eleventh titles were set forth the reasons why the plenitude of sanctifying grace and charity, together with their co-natural accompaniment, the plenitude

and perfection of all virtues, are found existing in the Sacred Heart. Even in ourselves our human nature may be so marvellously transformed, ennobled, supernaturalized, by sanctifying grace as to render us in a manner sons of God and *deified*. To use the wondrous language of the Psalmist: "I have said: You are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High" (Ps. lxxxi. 6). How much more, apart from the hypostatic union, did sanctifying grace, existing in the most supreme degree in Christ, still further beautify and most exquisitely adorn the Human Nature of the Man-God?

MEDITATION.

Sanctifying Grace in the Soul.

In us, too, by sanctifying grace, the Godhead abides in a very sublime and wondrous way. Let us dwell a moment on this most wonderful and most consoling thought.

1. **By Sanctifying Grace the Holy Spirit dwells within our Souls.**—"The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, *Who is given to us*," says St. Paul (Rom. v. 5); again, "Know you not that *your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, Who is in you*, Whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Cor. vi. 10); and again, "God . . . hath *given His Holy Spirit in us*" (1 Thess. iv. 8). Thus it is clear that the Holy Ghost dwells within the soul that is in sanctifying grace; He transforms it into the image of God (2 Cor. iii. 18), and, as a light within a crystal globe,

He illumines it by His glorious presence. He stamps His image on it as the seal imprints its form on the wax. Zacheus of old was blessed in having the Son of man beneath his roof, if only for a passing visit. How much more blessed are we in having the Holy Ghost beneath the roof-tree of our body, not as a transient Guest, but " to abide with us for ever," as long as we retain the priceless gift of sanctifying grace. Oh, wonderful greatness of this grace, which brings so sweet, so great, so holy, a Guest to dwell within the temple of our souls !

2. **By Sanctifying Grace we receive into our Souls the Blessed Trinity.**—" If anyone love Me, he will keep My word," says Christ ; " and My Father will love him, and *We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him*" (John xiv. 23) ; so that, in the words of St. John (1 John i. 3, 4), we " may rejoice," and our " joy may be full." " How little appears to me," says St. Chrysostom, " the power which Josue possessed over the greatest heavenly bodies, the sun and the moon, so that he could command them to stand still or to resume their motion ! For this is an incomparably greater honour, that we may draw down the Lord of Heaven Himself upon earth." Oh, wondrous power of sanctifying grace, which thus draws down the Blessed Trinity from Heaven, or, to speak more properly, converts our soul into a heaven, makes of it the glorious dwelling of the Triune God, the beauteous paradise of the Creator, the bridal chamber of the King of Heaven, the throne of the Divinity, the treasury and storehouse of the priceless gifts of God, the gorgeous shrine wherein the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost abide for ever !

3. **By Sanctifying Grace the Holy Ghost communicates to us His own Divine Life.**—If, as we have seen, the Holy Ghost dwells within the soul in sanctifying grace, His Divine presence must bear fruit. He is the living God, and is in a peculiar manner the Spirit or Breath of the Divine Life. As such He dwells within us, and imparts to our souls a new and supernatural life. The soul, indeed, has its own natural life, wherewith it informs the body and enables it to live, and move, and act. But beyond and above this purely natural life, which, in its lower and more material aspects, it possesses in common with the brute beasts, it becomes possessed of a noble and supernatural life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. How exquisitely sublime and precious is this life! How terrible to be deprived of it! The body without the soul is a foul, corrupting mass of putrid matter. Far more foul and putrid in the eyes of God is the dead soul bereft of its supernatural life of sanctifying grace. We guard with utmost care the life of the body and fly from all that might deprive us of it. With what solicitude do we fly from and avoid the far more dreadful death of the soul from which the Holy Spirit has departed? Let us, above all things, cherish and preserve this priceless gift of sanctifying grace and value it above all else. Amen.

SIXTEENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, IN WHICH THE FATHER IS WELL PLEASED.

1st Prelude.—Imagine you behold the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, at the hands of John the Baptist, and that you hear the voice from Heaven saying: *This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased* (Matt. iii. 17).

2nd Prelude. — Pray that you may ever find your greatest happiness in honouring the Sacred Heart, in paying Him the homage of your adoration, gratitude, and reparation, and in endeavouring to make Him the King and Centre of your own and of others' hearts.

COMMENTARY.

1. We find in Holy Scripture that, on two occasions in Our Lord's life, these self-same words were heard spoken by a voice from Heaven: first on the occasion of the Baptism of Jesus at the Jordan (Matt. iii. 17); secondly, at the Transfiguration, in the hearing of Peter, James, and John (Matt. xvii. 5). On two heads the Sacred Heart is the Object of the complaisance of the Eternal Father—as God and as Man. As God, the Eternal Father beholds in His Divine Son all the infinite perfections of the Divinity; as Man, He beholds in Him the perfections of His human Nature: those appertaining to Him in His official capacity as Messiah, Mediator, Redeemer, Legislator, and High-Priest; the perfection with which He announces His doctrine, performs His works of mercy, endures His sufferings, practises His virtues: humility, obedience, love, zeal for His Father's glory; together with the riches of wisdom,

and knowledge, and grace, and the plenitude of the Divinity already spoken of in previous titles. All these perfections, centred, so to speak, and focussed in the *Heart* of Christ, make of It a special object of complaisance to the Eternal Father.

2. This complaisance is of a threefold nature and effect, says Cornelius à Lapide, following the interpretation of the early Fathers. The Eternal Father is " well pleased " with Jesus as His Divine *Son*, whose infinite perfections are supremely dear to Him, especially His wondrous conformity in all things to His Heavenly Father's Will. *Secondly*, the Eternal Father looks with infinite complaisance on Jesus as the *Redeemer* of the human race, the Victim offered for the sins of men, the powerful Mediator Who alone can save the fallen creature from destruction and win back for him the right to heavenly bliss.

3. *Thirdly*, God the Father, omnipotent to glorify His Son, listens with unutterable complaisance to the prayer of Jesus : " Father, glorify Thy Name " (John xii. 28) ; " a voice therefore," adds the Evangelist, " came from Heaven : I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again " (*ibid.*). How marvellously has His Eternal Father's promise been fulfilled : " I have both glorified It [His Name] and I will glorify It again " ! Twenty centuries have passed since it was made, and the history of Christ's Church is a further and more glorious fulfilment of that promise. Yet this splendour is as nothing compared to the glory that will yet be manifested in the Saviour, when He comes to judge the nations, or when, later, in the beauty of His Father's House, He

reigns amid adoring men and Angels through the ages of eternal bliss.

In these latter days another glory has been added to the brows of Jesus, in the public worship of His Sacred Heart, in the marvellous effects devotion to the Sacred Heart has wrought throughout the Church, in the wondrous outpouring of the gifts of grace upon the clients of the Sacred Heart. God has willed to manifest to men the splendours and the riches of this Heart of love, that Jesus may have greater glory still, and that His Heart may be, in truth, the King and Centre of all hearts, in Whom His Father is well pleased.

MEDITATION.

Threefold Tribute of the Sacred Heart.

From another point of view the Eternal Father was "well pleased" with the Sacred Heart of His Divine Son—because, namely, He received, and ever will receive, from that Divine Heart, a supremely pleasing tribute of *adoration, gratitude,* and *reparation.*

1. **Adoration.**—No creature—not even the Blessed Virgin—ever offered to the Eternal Father a tribute of adoration at all comparable to that which Jesus offered, and still offers, to Him in His Sacred Humanity, especially in the mystery of the Eucharist. In intensity, in continuity, in extent, the value of the adoration offered by the Sacred Heart to the Eternal Father immeasurably surpasses that of all created beings—angelic and human—put together.

We can, in a manner, make these acts of our Divine Lord's human Heart our own by uniting our efforts with His, or, better still, by offering the adoration of the Divine Heart, especially in the Holy Sacrifice, in lieu of ours.

2. **Gratitude.**—The same may be said of the homage of thanksgiving offered to the Eternal Father by the Sacred Heart, as has been said of His homage of adoration. It is of immeasurably greater value than that of all creation put together. In the Mass alone we have a means of offering supremely acceptable thanksgiving to God for all His favours ; offering, as we may, to the Eternal Father the gratitude of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, together with the Sacred Heart Itself—the Heart of His beloved Son in Whom He is well pleased.

3. **Reparation.**—Like the perfume of sweet incense ever rising to the throne of God, go up the priceless acts of reparation that the Sacred Heart is always offering to His Eternal Father. The Life and Passion and Death of the Redeemer were a sublimely and Divinely perfect act of reparation to the offended majesty of the Creator. The Life of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist is a never-ceasing renewal of that act of reparation. The Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament is the chalice of expiation, ever pouring forth, at the feet of God, the cleansing and life-giving streams of the Precious Blood in atonement of most priceless value.

Prayer of St. Gertrude.

Joy and gladness be to Thee, O Jesus! for Thy incomprehensible greatness; for Thy supreme sanctity, excluding every blemish; for Thy glory and Thy perfect happiness.

Joy and gladness be to Thee for Thy Divine Heart, pierced, even unto death, with love for me.

Joy and gladness be to Thee in this most loving and most faithful Heart, which was opened to me by the lance, that into It my heart might enter and there seek repose.

Joy and gladness be to Thee in this most sweet Heart, my only refuge in this exile; this Heart so full of tenderest solicitude for me, so entirely saturated with its love for me, that It will never rest until It has brought me to a happy eternity.

SEVENTEENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, OF WHOSE FULNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED.

1st Prelude.—Behold St. John the Baptist speaking to the Jews of the Messiah and telling them that "*of His fulness we have all received*" (John i. 16). *Or* behold Christ saying to His Apostles at the Last Supper: "I am the vine; you are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit" (John xv. 5).

2nd Prelude.—Ask for a large share in the "fulness" and riches of the Sacred Heart.

With this title we enter on the *second portion* of the Litany, in which are set forth, in the series of titles that follow, the innumerable and wonderful benefits for which we are indebted to the Sacred Heart. Reflection on these benefits should fill us,

first, with an unbounded *gratitude* that will urge us to show very special honour and worship to the Sacred Heart; and, *secondly*, with a boundless *confidence* that will induce us to have recourse in all our necessities to this overflowing fountain of all blessings and favours, "of whose fulness we have all received."

COMMENTARY.

1. What are we to understand by the "*fulness*" of the Sacred Heart? The Sacred Heart is like a vast and overflowing fountain pouring forth upon the human race the priceless graces and blessings of Redemption. Christ is "the only-begotten of the Father, *full of grace and truth*" (John i. 14). "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights" (Jas. i. 17). St. Thomas tells us (3, q. 7, a. 9) that Christ is the Author and Source of all the graces that have ever been or ever will be conferred upon the human race by God, and he even goes so far as to say (3., q. 7, a. 11) that in a certain sense this "fulness" of grace in Christ may be considered infinite.

And here it may be remarked that these graces of Redemption are with justice attributed to the *Sacred Heart* of the Redeemer. Apart from the fact that whatever is attributed to the Sacred Heart is also and primarily attributable to the Sacred Humanity, three reasons may be assigned for specially attributing to the Sacred Heart this "*fulness*" of all graces, of which we are participators. For, *first*, according to St. Thomas (3., q. 8, a. 5), it is the *charity* of the Sacred Humanity that

is the source of the merits and satisfactions of the Redeemer. Now, the principal seat of this charity is the Sacred Heart. *Secondly*, though the entire humanity of Christ is enriched and embellished with the plentitude of grace and truth (John i. 14), His *Heart* is the special storehouse and depository of these treasures. *Thirdly*, their distribution is the outcome of Christ's love and mercy, and as such it is especially prompted by His Sacred Heart.

2. "Of whose fulness we have *all* received." For *all* without exception—even those without the Church—have a certain share in the Redemption. The Redeemer is "the true light which enlighteneth *every man* that cometh into this world" (John i. 9). How earnestly should we not pray for the benighted nations—like Japan, for instance—that yet sit in darkness and the shadow of death! Yet, doubtless, it is the children of the Church, the favoured friends and clients of the Sacred Heart, especially, that drink with joy from the fountains of the Saviour. For them, especially, these fountains are full to overflowing with the sweetest, choicest treasures of the Heart of Christ. In It the sinner finds the grace of pardon and repentance, and the Saint the grace that lifts him to the highest sanctity. In It the Apostle finds his zeal, the martyr courage, the confessor of Christ heroic constancy, the virgin purity. Nay, in the Sacred Heart Our Blessed Lady herself found the peerless graces that so marvellously adorned her immaculate soul.

3. "Of whose fulness *we have received*." The Saints and holy people of the Old Law who lived before Christ had indeed a share in the future re-

demption, by virtue of their belief in the Divine promises. They were saved by the anticipated merits of the Redeemer. Yet, compared to ours, *their* share in the graces of Redemption was but small indeed. For us Christ is the Vine; we are the branches that draw the vivifying, strengthening sap of Divine grace from the root of His Sacred Heart. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you," says Christ, "unless you abide in Me" (John xv. 4). The Sacred Heart is both the meritorious and the efficient cause of all the priceless gifts of grace, that, like the sap that flows from the root to the branches, flow, with all the generous "fulness" of a love that knows no bounds, from the Heart of Christ into our hearts and souls. In proportion as we are closely united by love and sanctifying grace to the Sacred Heart, in that proportion shall we bring forth fruit: "He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing" (John xv. 5). Let us ask, then, of the Sacred Heart to fill our hearts to overflowing with the "fulness" of His love and grace.

MEDITATION.

The Sacred Heart a Fountain of Grace.

1. The Saviour standing by the well of Jacob gave to the Samaritan woman to drink of the fountain of the "living water" of Divine grace that springs up "into life everlasting." "The Heart of Jesus," writes Blessed Margaret Mary, "is as a source of living water that springs up to water the garden of

our soul, wherein the flowers of virtue are wellnigh withered and dried up. That water will restore them to their natural beauty, that so, once more, our soul may be for God His garden of delights. 'My Heart,' said my Divine Master to me, 'will become for them an overflowing fountain of mercy, grace, pure love, and every sort of consolation.'" "Implore, then, of the Sacred Heart," she continues, "to be for you a fountain of living water, springing forth abundantly upon your heart."

2. The same holy virgin writes again: "This Divine Heart is an inexhaustible fountain from which there flow incessantly three streams: the *first* is the stream of *mercy* towards sinners, on whom is poured the spirit of contrition and repentance; the *second* is the stream of *charity*, which brings succour to the sorrowful and those in need, and especially to those aiming at perfection; the *third* is the stream of *love* and *light* that flows into all perfect souls, enabling them to dedicate themselves without reserve to the task of promoting the glory of the Sacred Heart."

3. That this "fulness" of the Sacred Heart may flow into our soul, it must be empty of all other love but that of God. It must be detached from itself, from creatures, and from the vain desires of the world of sin.

EIGHTEENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, DESIRE OF THE ETERNAL HILLS.

1st Prelude.—Behold the Patriarch Jacob, before his death, blessing his son Joseph and foretelling for him every good gift "until *the desire of the eternal hills* shall come" (Gen. xlix. 26).

2nd Prelude.—Ask light to understand how truly the Heart of Jesus is the "*desire of the eternal hills*"; ask, too, the grace of a longing desire for the moment of His coming.

COMMENTARY.

1. This phrase, "everlasting," or "eternal hills," is found in two places in Scripture—*i.e.*, where Jacob blesses his son Joseph with every blessing and good wish "until *the desire of the eternal hills* shall come" (Gen. xlix. 26); and again when "Moses blessed the children of Israel before his death," and the tribe of Joseph in a special manner, promising them an abundance of "the fruits of *the eternal hills*" (Deut. xxxiii. 15). Cornelius à Lapide and other Scripture commentators assign to this phrase "*desire of the eternal hills*" a twofold signification—one primary, the other secondary. In their *primary* interpretation "*the eternal hills*" are taken as a part to represent the whole, and stand metaphorically for the *entire created universe.* In this sense the Messiah, the future Redeemer of the human race, was the desired of all creation, Whose advent should repair the evils that had overwhelmed the entire world. In their *secondary and symbolical significance* the "*eternal hills*" stand for the *Saints, and patriarchs,*

and prophets of the Old Testament, who, by their eminent sanctity and gifts, were raised on earth, and still more would be raised in Heaven, above their fellow-men, as mountains rise above the valleys and surrounding plains.

2. The pages of the Old Testament bear striking testimony to this longing of the pre-Christian ages for the coming of the Messiah. It may be presumed that our first parents, from the moment that they learned of the promise of the Redeemer to come, longed earnestly for His arrival. Jacob longed for Him, as we have seen. Moses prayed: "I beseech Thee, Lord, send Whom Thou wilt send" (Exod. iv. 13). The great Isaias, the prophet *par excellence* of the Messiah, cries out in ecstasy of longing: "Let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour" (Isa. xlv. 8). King David voices without ceasing this longing of the Jewish people in the strong, pathetic language of the Psalms. His songs are full of the Messiah, of Whose Passion he speaks—*e.g.,* in the twenty-first Psalm, one would say rather as an onlooker than as a prophet speaking of things yet to be. Even among the outside nations the tradition stood forth clear and bold of One Whose coming should be fraught with most momentous consequences for the world's well-being.

3. But how, it may be asked, does all this apply to the Sacred Heart? In what sense is the *Sacred Heart* the "desire of the eternal hills"? Did devotion to the Sacred Heart exist in any sense before Christ's coming? To these questions there is a simple answer: The longing for the Messiah of the

patriarchs and prophets was the longing for the long-anticipated reign of Christ on earth—the longing for the accomplishment of the mysteries of Divine love and mercy that would one day regenerate the world and restore the pristine splendour of our fallen race. The new Law of Love that was destined to replace the hardness of the Old Law was framed within the Sacred Heart of the Redeemer. That loving Heart it was that stood for all the sweetness, love and mercy of the New Law. Hence *It* was in truth the real Object of the "desire of the eternal hills," the longing that looked forward so pathetically to the coming of the Christ that was to be. In short, the everlasting love of God for man was destined to be centred in the human Heart of Christ, the Man-God; and the just, who lived before His coming, were saved by virtue of their faith, and hope, and confidence in the anticipated love and mercy centred in this Sacred Heart—by the anticipated merits and Redemption of the Christ to come.

MEDITATION.

Threefold Longing of the Clients of the Sacred Heart.

True clients of the Sacred Heart are animated by a threefold longing: (1) Desire for the coming of Christ's kingdom—"Adveniat regnum tuum"; (2) desire to receive Him in Communion; (3) desire to be with Him in the joys of Heaven.

1. **Desire for the Coming of Christ's Kingdom.**—The strong consuming zeal that springs from true devotion to the Sacred Heart seeks, always and in

all things, the promotion and extension of the Kingdom of the Sacred Heart on earth. "Adveniat regnum tuum" (Thy kingdom come) is its watchword and its cry of battle. It is occupied in all things with the interest of the Sacred Heart. It strives in every way within its reach to promote these interests. Its love is not a sterile love, but one that proves itself by works and sacrifices made for Christ's dear sake.

2. **Desire to receive Him in Communion.**—The thirst and longing for the Bread of Life is a characteristic of devotion to the Sacred Heart. As a good appetite for food is the sign of a sound and healthy body, so the spiritual appetite for the reception of the Blessed Eucharist is a sign of vigour and health of soul. Moreover, as material food most benefits those who have an appetite for it, so, too, this spiritual Food produces, ordinarily speaking, its most marked effects on those who long for its reception.

3. **Desire to be with Him in the Joys of Heaven.**—"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" cries out St. Paul (Rom. vii. 24). And, again: "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). "When thou feelest this desire of eternal bliss infused into thee from above, and when thou longest to go forth from the tabernacle of the body, that thou mayest contemplate My beauty without shadow of vicissitude, dilate thy heart, and with all thy desire embrace this holy inspiration," says à Kempis in the *Imitation* (book iii., chap. xlix.).

Let us ask the Sacred Heart, the " desire of the eternal hills," to fill our souls with this threefold longing, that, ever zealous for His interests here on earth, and longing for the Bread of Life, we may come to dwell for ever with Him in the joys of Heaven. Amen.

NINETEENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, PATIENT AND RICH IN MERCY.

1st Prelude.—Behold Jesus, all gentleness and sweetness, in the midst of a vast crowd of sick persons, healing the blind and the lame and all manner of diseases, and welcoming sinners with marvellous love.

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to understand in some degree the wonderful patience and mercy of the Sacred Heart.

COMMENTARY.

Patience is defined by St. Augustine as a virtue by which we endure evils with equanimity, or, according to St. Thomas (2. 2., q. 136, a. 1), without giving in to sadness. Both definitions suppose that *suffering* is the necessary correlative of patience. Hence it may be asked: In what sense is the Heart of Jesus *patient?* Does the Sacred Heart *suffer*—is It *capable* of suffering *at the present moment* because of our sins or our ingratitude, or by reason of the outrages inflicted on It? To answer this question we must distinguish sharply between *actual suffering* and the *repulsion of the will* from which the suffering arises. Pain and suffering are the secondary and accidental effect of this repulsion of the will, and are found in human nature in its

mortal and passible state. The repulsion, aversion, horror, detestation of the will, may co-exist with absolute immunity from pain or suffering. They may exist in a glorified nature in Heaven. Thus it was with the Angels at the sight of Christ's Passion and Death. A species of analogy—very imperfect, indeed—exists in the case of certain ecstatics and Martyrs who were filled with joy in the midst of their mental or physical pains. The Heart of Jesus, in Its glorified life in Heaven or in the Blessed Eucharist, is no longer capable of actual suffering. Its glorified condition renders suffering impossible. But the human will remains. *It* feels all the repulsion, all the horror of sin, that, were the Soul of Jesus to deprive Itself of Its condition of beatitude, would still make It " sorrowful even unto death," as It was in the Garden of Olives. Hence it was that Jesus appeared to Blessed Margaret Mary, one Carnival, under the form of *Ecce Homo*, laden with His Cross and covered with blood, and addressed to her the pathetic complaint : " Is there no one who will have pity on Me, or who will compassionate Me in the pitiable condition to which sinners reduce Me, especially *at this present time ?*"

In another sense, too, the Sacred Heart may be said to suffer *actually* for the sins of mankind—namely, in His *mystical body* the Church, which is wounded and rent by our sins, and in which His Sacred Passion is, in a sense, perpetuated throughout all time.

Lastly, it is well to remark that sins committed to-day really afflicted the Saviour's Divine Heart in His Passion, inasmuch as, being God as well as

Man, the future and the past were both absolutely present to Him in their minutest details. Thus sins committed two thousand years afterwards were all actually present before Him in all their hideous and revolting enormity. Hence sinners to-day can say with most absolute truth that they actually crucify Jesus on Calvary, and inflict on Him the manifold sufferings of His Passion.

1. **The Heart of Jesus all Patience.** — "The whole life of Jesus," says à Kempis, "was a cross and a martyrdom." From the first moment of His life on earth He had ever before Him the clear and detailed vision of His most cruel Passion and Death. It never left Him. The apprehension of suffering is often worse than the reality, and that shrinking of nature must have grown as the years brought Him nearer to the awful moment of *most* exquisite pain. To all this were added the poverty, the fatigues, the privations and sufferings of His daily life. His sufferings were indeed *unceasing.*

They were also *intense.* Owing to the exquisite refinement of His human Nature, Jesus suffered far more keenly than any ordinary human being. The poverty of His surroundings, the rough, coarse men with whom He often came in contact, even what to others of a coarser nature would be merely trifling inconveniences, were to Him a source of suffering. And this, even taking no account of the unheard-of martyrdom that closed it all, when nothing save the Divinity within Him upheld Him in His cruel anguish. His sufferings, too, were absolutely *universal.* No portion of His human Nature was

exempt. His Soul a prey to the most terrible excess of mystic anguish in the Garden ; every portion of His poor, weak, worn Body, from the thorn-crowned Head, all soaked in blood, to the wounded Feet that left their ruddy footprints on the road to Calvary—each member was racked with overwhelming torture.

And, oh, the patience of the gentle Jesus through it all ! The joy with which He went to agony and death for love of us ! What wonderful submission to His Father's Will ! How truly patient is the Heart of Jesus ! And how truly patient is It still within the silent and too often lonely Tabernacle on our altars !

2. **The Heart of Jesus all Mercy.** — Listen to St. Matthew : " Jesus went about all Galilee . . . healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people " (Matt. iv. 23). " And there came to Him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others ; and they cast them down at His feet, and He healed them : so that the multitude marvelled, seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see. . . . And Jesus said : I have compassion on the multitude " (Matt. xv. 30-32). He was actually reproached with being the *Friend of sinners*. If He gives back health of body, it is still more to save the soul : " Thy sins are forgiven thee " is His parting blessing to the paralytic on his cure. " Come, follow Me," He says to Matthew the publican. Zacheus is loaded with graces in return for his hospitality. He saves a poor, sinful

woman from an awful death, and dismisses her with words of comfort and forgiveness : " Go, and sin no more." Another sinful woman, Magdalen, is welcomed back with scarce a word about the past. To the last He tries to save the traitor Judas. Peter is converted with a look of mercy. Paradise is opened to the dying thief. In truth, He is the Good Shepherd, ever looking for the poor, stray sheep ; the Father going forth to meet the prodigal. The mercy of the Heart of Jesus is unbounded, never tiring, all-embracing. " I assure you," He once said to St. Mechtildis, " there is no sinner, however great his sins may be, whom I am not ready to forgive at once, if he only repent sincerely of his sins. My Heart is ready to turn towards him with as much clemency and sweetness as though he never committed sin."

MEDITATION.

Confidence, Patience, and Mercy.

The thought of Jesus's Heart, so patient and so merciful, should fill us with unbounded *confidence*, with *patience*, and with *mercy*.

1. **Confidence.**—Who can consider attentively the wonderful goodness, kindness, and condescension of the Sacred Heart and not be filled with unbounded confidence and trust ? Jesus is still exactly what He was while here on earth. In Him there is no change. He is still the " Friend of sinners," ever ready to receive them back, no matter how grievously they may have offended. He is still the

Divine Wonderworker, as of old, healing every malady of soul and body, full of tenderest sympathy for the afflicted, with a solace for every misery and a balm for every wound. The pages of the monthly *Irish Messenger*, that record the thanksgivings for favours granted, bear eloquent and striking testimony to the fact that the great Heart of Jesus is to-day as full of sympathy with every form of human sorrow and affliction as It was two thousand years ago, when He "went about doing good and healing all" (Acts x. 38). To-day, as in Galilee of old, that same sweet invitation issues from the Saviour's lips: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." It is written broad across the history of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

2. **Patience.**—Can *we* be bold enough to chafe and murmur with impatience under the trials that God sends us for our good, and yet look upon our Saviour in the Garden, or the *Ecce Homo*, or behold Him hanging on the Cross through hours of agonizing torture, or pouring from His lance-pierced Heart Its last few drops of Precious Blood—and all for *us?*

3. **Mercy.**—Jesus takes as done for Himself whatever we do in His behalf for others. Our debt to Him is infinite. That debt we can pay off in the person of our neighbour—especially by charity shown to God's poor. "Blessed are the merciful," says Christ, "for they shall obtain mercy." If we would receive a merciful sentence at the Judgment Day, let us earn it now by being merciful ourselves to others.

TWENTIETH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, RICH TO ALL WHO INVOKE THEE.

1st Prelude.—Behold St. Paul writing the words: "For the Scripture saith: Whosoever believeth in Him shall not be confounded. For there is no distinction of the Jew and the Greek; for the same is Lord over all, *rich unto all that call upon Him*" (Rom. x. 11, 12).

2nd Prelude.—Ask light to understand the full meaning of this invocation, and grace to share in the incomparable *riches* of the Sacred Heart.

COMMENTARY.

We have already considered the *patience* and the *mercy* of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; we now proceed to reflect on His unbounded *liberality*.

1. According to à Lapide, the word "rich," as used above with reference to Christ, implies not merely the possession of vast treasures, but also boundless liberality and generosity in distributing them. Wealth does not, of necessity, imply liberality, nor liberality wealth. A millionaire may be a miser; a pauper may be liberal. The word "rich" used in this title of the Litany attributes to the Sacred Heart of Jesus both unbounded wealth and unbounded liberality in bestowing it upon His friends.

Again, according to the text of St. Paul, this liberality is shown to *all*. "Jew and Greek" may share in it "without distinction." This is the *Divine liberality* of the Redeemer Who has died for *all*. Yet one condition is required: they must

" call upon Him." Faith and confidence in Christ, united with earnest, persevering prayer, are, ordinarily speaking, the necessary dispositions for receiving of the riches of His Sacred Heart.

2. The words of the present invocation of the Litany may, perhaps, be taken in a more restricted sense than in the text of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. They seem to adumbrate the extraordinary and very special generosity of Jesus in His dealings with those who make a point of cultivating in a peculiar manner the special practice of devotion to His Sacred Heart that He revealed to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. I do not for a moment say it is confined to these *alone*. I merely say that clients of the Sacred Heart are in a very special manner the recipients of Its unbounded generosity ; that Jesus treats them, in a fashion, as the special friends and favourites of His Heart of boundless liberality and love. In other words, there is the *ordinary* Providence of God, whereby He watches over all His creatures with a Father's love ; and His *extraordinary* Providence, in virtue of which He bestows certain exceptional and extraordinary graces on a chosen few—the fervent clients, namely, of His Sacred Heart.

3. What are these exceptional graces ? They may be found—in part, at least, and in a very imperfect résumé—in the traditional formula popularly known as " The Promises of the Sacred Heart." These " Promises," made by Jesus to the clients of His Sacred Heart, are as follows :

(1) I will give them all the graces necessary for their state.

(2) I will give peace in their families.

(3) I will console them in all their afflictions.

(4) I will be their secure refuge in life, and especially at their death.

(5) I will bestow abundant blessings on all their undertakings.

(6) Sinners shall find in My Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.

(7) Tepid souls shall become fervent.

(8) Fervent souls shall rise to high perfection.

(9) I will bless the homes in which the image of My Sacred Heart shall be exposed and honoured.

(10) I will give to priests a peculiar facility of touching the most hardened hearts.

(11) The persons who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, and they shall never be effaced from It.

(12) I promise thee, in the excess of the mercy of My Heart, that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who go to Communion on the first Friday of every month, for nine consecutive months, the grace of final perseverance, and they shall not die under My displeasure nor without receiving their* Sacraments, and that My Heart shall be their secure refuge at that last hour.

* This promise is found in two places in the writings of Blessed Margaret Mary, and is quite as authentic as those that precede it. In each case the French is: "Ils ne mourront point . . . sans recevoir *leurs Sacrements*" (They shall not die without receiving *their* Sacraments)—*i.e.*, such as are necessary there and then for their salvation, not necessarily what are known as the "Last Sacraments." For some, these "Last Sacraments" may be their last Confession and Communion before death.

MEDITATION.

How to Secure a Participation in the "Riches" of the Sacred Heart.

These "Promises," which are elsewhere given in their original and more authentic form, are highly suggestive of the generosity with which the Sacred Heart pours forth Its riches upon those who love and honour It. They show that It is "*rich*" indeed to all those who call upon It.

There are three ways especially whereby we may procure for ourselves a participation in the "riches" of the Sacred Heart: (1) *By dedicating ourselves to Its special service;* (2) *by zeal in promoting Its interests;* (3) *by various practices of piety in Its honour.*

1. **Dedication of Ourselves to the Special Service of the Sacred Heart.**—Jesus is our great Captain, King, and Leader. Like every other King, He has His courtiers and His army, composed of persons whose lives are specially dedicated to His service. Such persons naturally enjoy a larger share of the royal favour than the ordinary run of His subjects. Listen to what Blessed Margaret Mary says about this matter: "He assured me that the pleasure He takes in being loved, known, and honoured by His creatures is so great that, if I mistake not, He promised me that *no one who has specially dedicated and consecrated himself to Him will ever perish.*" Even an earthly Sovereign considers himself, in a manner, bound to look after those who have placed themselves and their lives and property at His

disposal. How much more will the generous-hearted Saviour of the world watch over and protect from everlasting death those who consecrate their lives and fortunes to His service.

2. **Zeal in Promoting Its Interests.**—What are His own words? "Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, and they shall never be effaced from It." Earthly monarchs bestow rich rewards on those who show themselves zealous and devoted in the promotion of their interests. The richest posts, the highest honours in the nation, are their portion. Can we for a moment think that *our* great King and Captain will be less generous in His royal munificence than earthly Sovereigns? *His* goodness and *His* power are greater far than theirs.

3. **Practices of Piety in Its Honour.**—We know what He has promised to do for those who go to Communion in His honour on the first Friday of every month. The various practices of the *Apostleship of Prayer*—those especially that belong to the "Three Degrees," as they are termed—constitute a body of devotional acts, easy, simple, solid in their nature, that have the sanction and approval of the Church. Long experience of their efficacy in nourishing devotion to the Sacred Heart within the soul provides the amplest proof of their utility.

To Thee, O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I dedicate and consecrate my entire being—my body with all its senses, my soul with all its faculties and powers—that all that I have and all that I am may be Thine and Thine alone in time and for eternity. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, FOUNT OF LIFE AND HOLINESS.

1st Prelude.—Imagine you hear the Saviour saying: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" (John x. 10).

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to seek for "life" and "holiness" in the Sacred Heart.

COMMENTARY.

The kingdom of Heaven, of which we became possessed by the mercy and generosity of the Sacred Heart, implies the possession of two qualities—immunity from mortal sin or the state of sanctifying grace, in which consists the supernatural *life* of the soul; and, secondly, the resultant state of *sanctity*, existing in a greater or less measure in the soul, according to the *degree* of sanctifying grace it is possessed of. Our present object is to show that the possession of this twofold quality directly results from devotion to the Sacred Heart.

1. **The Heart of Jesus is the Fount of Life.**—This portion of the title seems taken from the thirty-fifth Psalm: "For with Thee is the *fountain of Life*" (ver. 10). Commenting on these words, Cardinal Bellarmine says that God is the source of wisdom and life and being, because He has not received from without either wisdom, or life, or being, but is Himself the plenitude of all these. In the language of philosophy, God is pure actuality (*actus purus*). He is the very principle and plenitude of life—life itself, incapable of lacking any

element of life or being (*nullo modo in potentia*). As such He is the very *source of life*—the primal cause from which all life and being is derived. All living things—the plants, the animals, the human race, the angels—all derive their life from Him alone: their natural life in the first place, and, secondly, in the case of men and angels, the higher life of the immortal spirit—supernatural life. It is of this supernatural life of grace and glory that this present title treats. By virtue of this life we become in a most marvellous way, as St. Peter terms it (2 Pet. i. 4), "partakers of the Divine Nature." Endowed with a new and wholly supernatural activity that entirely transcends our native powers as human beings, we become, in a manner, like to God, so united to Him, so dependent on Him, so transformed into Him, that the Doctors of the Church can find no fitter phrase to express this wonderful change than to call it a deification of human nature. "We are now become the sons of God. . . . We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him," are the words of St. John (1 John iii. 2); for "in Him is life, and the life is the light of men" (John i. 4). All this we have from God, through Jesus Christ His Son, through Whom, and especially through Whose Sacred Heart, descend into our souls the Divine graces and gifts that constitute our supernatural life.

2. **The Heart of Jesus is the Fount of Sanctity.**—Being the fount of supernatural life, the Sacred Heart must also be the "fount of sanctity." For, in its last analysis, sanctity consists in the union of

the soul with God by sanctifying grace, whereby it lives in God and God in it. The degree of sanctity is measured by the degree of sanctifying grace existing in the soul. Now, St. Thomas tells us (3, q. 8, a. 1) that with Christ as Head of the human race it rests to " form the life of grace within all the members of the Church." This He does, pursues St. Thomas, as *God* in virtue of His own authority, as *man* by virtue of " His Humanity acting as the instrument of His Divinity." It was as Man-God and Messiah that He promised the waters of Divine grace to the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. In His Sacred Humanity, too, was accomplished the prophecy of Zacharias : " In that day there shall be a *fountain* open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem " (Zach. xiii. 1). This open fountain (of all grace), says St. Gregory, is no other than God made Man ; or, as à Lapide explains, His Sacred Wounds, and most of all the Wound of His most Sacred Heart. Here is the beautiful conclusion which St. Ambrose draws from the consideration of this prophecy : " Everything we have is in Christ, and Christ is all in all for us. If you have a wound to heal, He is your physician ; if you are consumed with fever, He is a refreshing fountain ; are you overwhelmed in iniquity, He is your justification ; do you need support, He is your strength ; do you shrink from death, He is your life ; if you fly from darkness, He is light ; if you require nourishment, He is your food." " Thus Christ " (the Sacred Heart), says à Lapide, " is the source and fountain of wisdom, of charity, of grace, of virtue, and, in short, of every blessing that we stand in need of."

MEDITATION.

A Fountain—Fitting Symbol of the Sacred Heart.

A *fountain* or source possesses three peculiar properties whereby it is distinguished from a *river*, a *canal*, or a *reservoir*: (1) it springs from the depths of the earth; (2) it is practically inexhaustible and perenially flowing; (3) it is at the service of all. Under these three aspects it is a fitting symbol of the Sacred Heart.

1. **The Fountain springs from the Depths of the Earth.**—The river or the canal is merely a channel or instrument for the conveying or distribution of water over the surface of the land. It does not itself give birth to or produce the water. The fountain, on the other hand, *produces* water, which comes bubbling up from its depths as from a *productive* principle or source. In like manner the Sacred Heart of Jesus is not merely an instrument or channel through which the living waters of Divine grace flow into the soul; it is the very source and fountain whence these waters spring. For God is the primal cause and source of every grace and blessing we possess. "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas. i. 17). Now, God communicates His gifts to us through the merits of the Redeemer. Hence through the Sacred Humanity, and especially through the Sacred Heart, we receive these gifts. Nowhere do they flow in greater abundance than from the Blessed Eucharist,

whether dwelling on our altars or received into our hearts in Holy Communion. To this abundant and most fruitful source of grace—the Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist—we shall turn for the spiritual life and sanctification of our souls.

2. **The Fountain is practically inexhaustible.**—It contains within itself the means of its replenishment. In this it differs from the *reservoir,* which merely serves to keep and treasure up the waters it already possesses. No matter how much water you may draw from the fountain, there is always more at hand. You cannot drain it dry. The more you draw the fresher and the more abundantly it flows. So it is with the Sacred Heart. " You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains," says Isaias (xii. 3). Without measure, without end, they pour their streams of " living water " into the hearts of those that call upon Him. In the Sacraments—especially the Blessed Eucharist—in the Mass, in answer to our every prayer, by a thousand channels this wealth of grace, and light, and benediction flows into our souls. To whom, therefore, shall we go for every help and grace we need but to Him Whose Heart is as " a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting "? (John iv. 14).

3. **The Fountain is at the Service of all.**—Of its own nature it is the property of all who come to draw of its waters. High and low, rich and poor, *all* may come to slake their thirst at its never-failing source. In the same way the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the celestial fountain at which *all* may drink. " Come to Me," He says, " *all you that*

labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you." To this fountain *all* may come to wash their souls from sin amid its cleansing waters ; to it they come to moisten the arid soil of their hearts, that forth from them may spring the flowers of every virtue ; to It they come to seek solace and refreshment in the heat, and dust, and labour of the day ; in It they seek to extinguish the fires of passion that at times burst forth and threaten their destruction. In a word, at this heavenly source sinner and Saint, the weak and the strong, *all* find courage, and strength, and help to fight the battle of life bravely, faithfully, fervently, even to the end.

TWENTY-SECOND TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.

1st Prelude.—Behold St. John the Evangelist, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, writing the words, " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just : and *He is the propitiation for our sins* " (1 John ii. 1, 2)

2nd Prelude.—Ask *light* to understand how the Heart of Jesus is the "Propitiation for our sins," and *grace* to seek and find in It pardon for our transgressions.

COMMENTARY.

1. **The Catholic Doctrine of Propitiation.** — The word *propitiation* means in general the act of rendering another propitious or favourable in our regard. In its religious sense it has the added signification of an offering or sacrifice made to God in atonement for our sins. The Church's doctrine

in the matter is officially formulated in the teaching of St. Paul (Rom. iii. 23 *et seq.*): "For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God hath proposed to be a *propitiation*, through faith in His Blood, to the showing of His justice, for the remission of former sins." God was in no way bound (to use a word that cannot properly be applied to God) to pardon the prevarication of His creature, nor had we of ourselves the means of making atonement. Yet He Whose mercy is above all His works devised a way of reconciling the claims of infinite justice with the promptings of His infinite mercy. The Word Incarnate, "Jesus Christ the Just," as St. John calls Him, became man that, as man, He might atone for our iniquities, and that, as God, that atonement might be infinite. By every act of His *mortal life* on earth, even to the last; by His sublime obedience, and humility, and exercise of every virtue; by the sufferings of His Passion and Death, Christ offered to His Eternal Father an *infinite* sacrifice of propitiation for the sins of the entire human race. Henceforth Christ was the Divine Mediator between God and man. By His merits we are saved. Nor did His active life of propitiation cease when He expired on the Cross. It was continued in His *eucharistic life*, whether He is offered as a Divine *Sacrifice* of priceless value on the altar, or becomes the precious Food and Strengthener of our souls in the *Sacrament* of Holy Communion. Nay, more, even in His *life of glory* in Heaven He still offers propitiation for our sins.

"He is at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us," says St. Paul (Rom. viii. 34). "He is always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). And this He does, not merely by His all-powerful prayers addressed by Him to His Eternal Father in His glorified Humanity as man, not merely by the oblation of the infinite merits and satisfactions of His mortal life, but also by His mere presence before the throne of God, and by the offering of His Five Most Precious Wounds, the glorious trophies and memorials of His victory over sin and Hell. Therefore He is, in the words already cited from St. John, our "Advocate with the Father . . . the propitiation for our sins."

2. **In what Sense is this Propitiation specially attributed to the Sacred Heart of the Redeemer?**—In answer to this question it must first be noted that propitiation is the special attribute of the Sacred *Humanity* of Christ. It is the work of His human Nature as distinguished from the Divinity, according to the statement of St. Paul: "For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the *Man Christ Jesus*, Who gave Himself a redemption for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). As *Man* He offers propitiation; by virtue of His Divine Personality that propitiation is *infinite*. Now, this work of propitiation is the outcome of Christ's *love*—His love of God and man, whereby, in obedience to His Father's will, "He hath delivered Himself for us" (Eph. v. 2). This love was the animating principle and motive of all the labours and sufferings of His Life and Death. Jesus was in truth the Victim of His love.

His love was, in a sense, the altar on which He made the sacrifice of Himself for our redemption. Now, whence did that love originate and have its source but in His Sacred Heart? Hence it is to the *Sacred Heart* of the Redeemer that the work of propitiation is specially attributed.

Again, it was mainly by His *sufferings* that Christ propitiated His Eternal Father for our sins. These sufferings were of two kinds—those that affected His Body and those that affected His Soul. The latter were the more grievous, inasmuch as the soul has a greater capacity of suffering than the body. The terrible intensity of His mental anguish may be judged from His words in the Garden of Olives: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," and by His dying words upon the Cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" His Sacred Heart it was that was directly affected by these mental sufferings. Under this aspect, also, it was His Sacred Heart that was chiefly concerned in the work of making propitiation for our sins.

Nor did this work cease with His Death. His Sacred Heart was opened by the lance as He hung dead upon the Cross. And even to the end of time, still living in our midst, His Sacred Heart is a victim of propitiation to His Heavenly Father in the Blessed Eucharist. Day and night, within the lonely Tabernacle, It offers up "an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness" (Eph. v. 2) in atonement for the sins of men; whilst in His heavenly home His Sacred Heart is "ever living to make intercession for us," pouring forth

in our behalf before the throne of God a mighty prayer of intercession to propitiate God's justice for our sins.

MEDITATION.

Depositions Necessary to Render the Sacred Heart the Propitiation for our Sins.

We are all sinners, and we all need to avail ourselves of the propitiation offered by the Sacred Heart for our sins. How are we to do so? (1) By faith in His power; (2) by confidence in His willingness to help us; (3) by love of His goodness.

1. **Faith in His Power.**—The Sacred Heart is the human Heart of the Man-God. His intercession with His Father is omnipotent. His special office as Redeemer is to act as Mediator between us, poor sinful creatures, and the offended justice of His Father. His merits are an infinite and most precious store of graces awaiting us, whenever we call upon Him in the proper spirit. It follows that we should have unlimited faith in His power to help us. This faith will be the foundation of our confidence. Let us, therefore, say: "O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I firmly believe in Thee; I believe that Thou art all powerful to help me, overflowing with most ardent love for me, full of longing to pour forth Thy love and grace into my soul. I believe, O Sacred Heart; help Thou my unbelief."

2. **Confidence in His Willingness to Help Us.**—It is impossible, if we only reflect in the most passing way on all that He has done for us, not to feel

profoundly convinced of the entire readiness of the Sacred Heart to help us. The thought of His life of labour and humiliation and His martyrdom of untold suffering, all endured for our salvation; the thought of Jesus, the loving Prisoner of the Tabernacle, our daily Sacrifice, our Food; the history of His wondrous dealings with us in our own past lives—all these are motives for unbounded confidence in the willingness of the Sacred Heart of our Redeemer, Friend, and Father to assist us in our every need. Let us often say: "In Thee, O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I have hoped; let me not be confounded for ever." Though my sins be red as blood, they shall be made white as snow in the cleansing waters of Thy Sacred Heart.

3. **Love for His Goodness.**—The goodness of the Heart of Jesus is unbounded. The wildest flights of fancy could not picture love to equal His. "Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friends." But what if He be God, and yet annihilate Himself to become their food. What if He receive from them but outrage and indignity, and yet, despite their wickedness, He still pursue them with undying love. "O Love! Thou art not loved; would that Thou wert loved as Thou deservest." We at least will try to make Him some return of love, and in that fire of love our sins shall be consumed and burned away. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, SATURATED WITH REVILINGS.

1st Prelude.—Behold the Prophet Jeremias uttering the prophetic words, "He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him, *and he shall be filled with reproaches*" (Lam. iii. 30).

2nd Prelude.—Ask the gift of keen and loving sympathy with the Sacred Heart in His profound humiliations.

The following four invocations regard the *suffering* life of the Redeemer. The first reminds us of His *humiliations;* the second of His *sorrows;* the third of His *obedience,* which was the animating principle of all His sufferings; the fourth recalls the *piercing of His Sacred Heart* by the soldier's lance. In many ways the sufferings of the soul surpass those of the body; they are capable of greater *intensity;* for, being a *spiritual* being, there is practically no limit to the soul's capacity of suffering, whereas when carried beyond a certain intensity, physical pain renders the body unconscious, or even causes death. Again, in their extent the sufferings of the soul may far surpass the sufferings of the body, whose capacity in this respect is circumscribed and measured by the comparatively narrow ambit of the senses.

COMMENTARY.

The sufferings of Christ's human Soul fall mainly under two broad heads—those which He endured in His *honour,* and those which He experienced in

His *love*. The former were the result of the outrages and humiliations He endured, and are the subject of this present invocation ; the latter were the outcome of the sorrows that, in the terms of the following invocation, "*bruised*" His Divine Heart.

The Latin phrase of the Vulgate, *saturabitur opprobriis*, is much stronger than its weak English translation, *filled with reproaches*. It conveys the idea that Jesus in His Passion was, to use the vigorous Latin metaphor, *saturated* or *drenched* with reproaches and humiliations, as a garment or a piece of cloth is drenched with rain ; so that, without stint or measure, His human soul was inundated by a very sea of outrage and humiliation, beneath whose surging billows it would have absolutely sunk were He not supported by the Divinity within Him.

Jesus suffered in His honour—as *Man*, as *King*, as *God*—in other words, He suffered in His *Humanity*, in His *Royalty*, in His *Divinity*. Let us see what each of these three kinds of sufferings means.

1. **The Humiliations of Jesus in His Sacred Humanity.**—Born like an outcast in a stable, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Herod sought to murder Him in His earliest childhood. He was neglected and ignored in Nazareth. Every enormity of insult and humiliation was heaped upon Him in His Passion ; seized like a robber, struck in the face, spit upon, treated as a fool, mocked, derided, scourged, herded with the vilest criminals, held inferior to the worst of them, Barabbas, exposed to public outrage, crucified in the place of honour between two thieves, in presence of

the entire Jewish people—absolutely nothing was wanting to fill to the full the bitter cup of His profound humiliation as Man. It is all summed up in a single vivid sentence of Isaias: "There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness . . . despised and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not" (Isa. liii. 2, 3).

2. **The Humiliations of Jesus in His Kingship.**—He had laboured hard to establish His kingdom upon earth—the kingdom of His Sacred Heart of Love; He had striven to have His claim accepted as the Messiah, the Long Expected of the Nations, the true and sovereign King of Israel; and lo! He is treated as a common vulgar pretender, proclaimed by the very priests themselves, the official exponents of the Law, to be a mere usurper, a vain seeker after royal honours, a seducer of the people—in short, an impious and unscrupulous impostor. He expires on a traitor's gibbet, with the mark of His dishonour written large upon His brows in bristling thorns, and even more manifestly still in mocking characters above the Cross: "*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.*" Jerusalem, that had but lately hailed Him with Hosannas, now rejects Him with the cry: "*We have no king but Cæsar.*" The vilest wretches bend the knee in mocking homage as He sits upon His throne of scorn, with a reed for sceptre and the agonizing thorns for crown, and say to Him in biting irony: "*Hail, King of the Jews.*" Oh, how His Heart was steeped in bitterest humiliation by it all!

3. **The Humiliations of Jesus in His Divinity.**—Yet all these outrages were as nothing if compared with the humiliations He received in His Divinity. He, the Divine Majesty, the God of Heaven and earth, the great Creator of the Universe, the Second Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity, proclaimed aloud to be a liar, a blasphemer, a usurper! That Divine countenance, on which the Angels fear to look, struck by the hand of a brutal soldier, spit upon, reviled! His death in torments on the Cross seems to give the lie to His statement before Pilate, so solemn and so terrifying in its calm magnificence, "Thou hast said it [*i.e.*, I am Christ the Son of God] . . . hereafter you shall see [Me] the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of Heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). And He dies with the impious challenge ringing in His ears: "If Thou be the Son of God, come down now from the Cross"—dies "full of reproaches," drenched with humiliations, "a worm and no man: the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. xxi. 7). How truly, indeed, is this Divine Heart "filled" to overflowing "with reproaches"!

MEDITATION.

The Reproaches offered to the Sacred Heart.

The "*Reproaches*" offered to the Sacred Heart may also be divided into those which It suffered—(1) during the lifetime of Jesus on earth; (2) which It suffers daily in the Blessed Eucharist.

1. **Reproaches inflicted on the Sacred Heart during Christ's Sojourn on Earth.**—The "*Reproaches*" falling under this head may be subdivided into three kinds: (1) The reproach of *poverty*. The world looks on poverty as a reproach. It was doubly so in the old Jewish times, ere the noble ideal of Christian poverty was consecrated by the example of Our Lord. In the eyes of the Jews poverty was a disgrace—a punishment of God for sin. To be poor was practically to bear the brand of infamy. To this humiliation Our Blessed Lord submitted. It accompanied Him, ever growing as the years advanced, from the lowly stable to the ignominious Cross. "He was poor in His birth, poor in His life, and very poor in His death." (2) The reproach of *sin*. How the exquisitely sinless Heart of the Redeemer shrank with utter horror at the awful vision of the world's iniquities raining down upon Him in the Garden of Gethsemani! They inundated and drenched His Heart with matchless woe, and forced from Him the cry, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." (3) The reproach of *dishonour*. Under this latter head come all the outrages inflicted on the Saviour in His Passion. Whether we behold Him jeered at by Herod and his Court, and clad in the white robe of a fool, or scourged at the pillar of shame, or in the *Ecce Homo*, or seated crowned with thorns on a mock throne, or hanging on a gibbet midway between two thieves—He is, in all, the "worm and no man, the reproach of men, the outcast of the people," and His Heart is "*filled*" to overflowing "*with reproaches.*"

2. **Reproaches endured by the Sacred Heart in the Blessed Eucharist.**—Even with the termination of Christ's mortal life the reproaches heaped upon His Sacred Heart by no means ended. By a wondrous dispensation of His love, the humiliations of the crucified Redeemer are perpetuated, and, if anything, augmented in His eucharistic life. In the Tabernacle His self-annihilation is more utter and profound than even on the Cross of Calvary. Not even does His Sacred Humanity appear. And then, to say nothing of the positive insults and outrages offered to Him by His enemies, what utter coldness, what indifference, ingratitude, neglect, He meets with, even from His friends, even from those who are consecrated to His special service! Am I among the number? Does the reproach of the abandoned Tabernacle touch me? If so, it shall henceforth be my duty and privilege to make the best amends I can for so much base and criminal ingratitude. To Jesus's Heart, all burning with the tenderest love of me, I shall ever strive to offer my best tribute of a return of the most ardent love and faithful homage that my own poor sinful heart can give.

TWENTY-FOURTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, CRUSHED FOR OUR INIQUITIES.

1st Prelude.—Behold Jesus, "the Man of Sorrows," as in the *Ecce Homo*. Behold the Prophet Isaias writing of Him: "He was *bruised for our sins* . . . and by His bruises we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5).

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to realize how the Heart of Jesus was "bruised for our sins," and beg to be filled in your turn, with profound compassion, gratitude, and love towards that Divine Heart.

COMMENTARY.

1. **The Heart of Jesus Crushed for our Iniquities in the Garden of Olives.**—Père Gallifet, S.J., in his admirable work on the Sacred Heart, assures us that the *Heart* of Our Divine Lord endured greater suffering in His Passion than any other portion of His Sacred Body. The reason is, he tells us, that the interior sufferings of the Saviour were far more grievous than such as were merely exterior, and that these interior sufferings had their centre in His Heart.

We may contemplate these interior sufferings in the *first* place in *His Agony in the Garden of Olives*. "'My soul,' He said, 'is sorrowful, even unto death;' as though He would say," says à Lapide, "'I feel profoundly sad and overwhelmed with sorrow, as though I were about to die. I suffer all the agony and interior anguish of approaching death. The intensity of My interior suffering is sufficient to deprive Me of My life.'" What were the causes of

this sorrow? They were mainly three: (1) The clear *foreknowledge* that Our Saviour had of every minute detail of His dolorous Passion and Death. The mere apprehension of suffering is often even worse than the reality. Jesus's exquisitely refined and sensitive human Nature shrank with an intensity of human apprehension from the awful ordeal that awaited Him. That terrible shrinking of His human Nature wellnigh froze the Blood within His Sacred Heart, and all but broke that trembling Heart with overwhelming anguish. (2) Added to this was the horrid, loathsome *vision of the sins of men.* Vast and endless as the ocean, foul and hideous beyond imagination, they crowded in, in ever-increasing multitudes, upon Him. He Who was spotless sanctity itself saw Himself clothed in a garment of iniquity, and the horrid contact, the oppressive weight, bruised and crushed His Sacred Heart until Its very life-blood oozed in ruddy drops like perspiration from each pore. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of all," says the Prophet (Isa. liii. 6). (3) The third cause of anguish was *the black ingratitude of men*—the thought that in so many cases all His sufferings would have been endured in vain. He might re-echo the words of the Psalmist, "What profit is there in My blood?" (Ps. xxix. 10). This was, perhaps, the bitterest of all the mental sufferings of the Saviour. To love and suffer out of love, as He did, and then to know that it was all in vain—what fact could be more calculated to "bruise" the generous tender Heart of the Redeemer?

2. **The Heart of Jesus Crushed for our Iniquities in His subsequent Passion and Death.**—The martyrdom of sorrow did but begin with the agony in the Garden. The Heart of Jesus was yet to be filled with anguish by the treason of His former Apostle and friend—the traitor Judas. It was still further to be broken by the cowardly abandonment of the other Apostles, who, when most of all He stood in need of their loyal assistance, "all leaving Him, fled" (Matt. xxvi. 56). Nay, not content with leaving Him alone in His hour of greatest need, their chief, the chosen friend of Christ, denied Him publicly and swore thrice over that he knew Him not. Even Mary, His beloved Mother, was a source of anguish to her Divine Son's loving Heart. The sight of her, all drowned in sorrow, standing by His Cross, but added to the sorrows of His broken Heart. Yet the climax of the sorrows of the Sacred Heart was yet to come. No words can tell the bitterness that found a voice in that strange cry of utter misery: "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" Theologians differ as to the precise meaning of these words. They did not, could not, connote any severance of the inseparable connection between the Sacred Humanity of Christ and His Divinity. The hypostatic union and all that it implies could never for a moment cease. In what sense, then, did God "abandon" His beloved Son? What seems the likeliest explanation is, perhaps, that at the supreme moment of His Death the sustaining influence and action of the Divine Nature which had hitherto supported His human Nature to enable It to suffer in a measure and degree

far surpassing its merely human powers of endurance, was for the time suspended, and remained inoperative. Hence the human Nature, left to itself, and unsupported by the Divinity, sank beneath its overwhelming affliction, and Jesus, crying with a loud voice, gave up His Soul Himself into the hands of God. In presence of these mysteries we can only bend our heads in lowly and adoring surmise of the awful agony of loss that utterly "crushed" and rent the Sacred Heart of the Redeemer. By it, if we proved faithful, we were spared the everlasting pain of loss that constitutes the greatest suffering of the damned in Hell.

MEDITATION.

What "Crushes" the Heart of Jesus.

What, on our part, were the causes of the sorrows that thus "crushed" the Sacred Heart? They were mainly three: our sins, our ingratitude, and our indifference.

1. **Our Sins.**—The Prophet Isaias expressly says that "He was bruised *for our sins*" (Isa. liii. 5); and, again: "*For the wickedness of My people* have I struck Him" (Isa. liii. 8). Each one of us has had a share in inflicting these sorrows on the Sacred Heart; to each one, therefore, it belongs to make reparation. Hence the necessity of works of penance, if we are to be true clients and apostles of the Sacred Heart. Our penance should bear some proportion to the degree in which we have inflicted sorrow on the Heart of Christ.

2. **Our Ingratitude.**—There is nothing that so hurts us as the ingratitude of those for whom we have done much. Yet what has any of us done for another compared with all that Jesus has done for each of us? What is our love for another compared with the infinite love He has for us? What, therefore, is the ingratitude of anyone towards us compared with the black ingratitude we have been guilty of towards Jesus Christ. Henceforth it shall not be so.

3. **Our Indifference.**—Indifference is the worst form of ingratitude. It means the absolute ignoring of the benefits conferred on us—an utter insensibility to favours granted. It connotes, not ignorance, but rather deliberate contempt of these favours. It contains a note even of contumely. This, alas! is the attitude of millions of the human race towards Christ. They know Him, they are well aware of all that He has done for them, and yet they are indifferent, insensible, unmoved. Take even very many so-called Catholics, even religious persons: He invites them to the banquet of His Love; they do not come. He awaits them in His eucharistic Presence on the Altar; they neglect Him. His Heart is overflowing with Its love for them; they never think of Him. How do we ourselves behave in this respect?

Act of Reparation of St. Gertrude.

Hail, vivifying ray of the Divinity! Hail, incorruptible flower of our humanity! Most sweet Jesus, I give thanks to You and bless You, by the hearts of all rational beings, in reparation for all the blasphemies, for all the outrages, heaped upon You here on earth.

I bless You for every sigh, for every tear, for every sorrow You endured.

I bless You for every drop of Blood You shed in Your Passion, for every blow You got, for every grief You felt.

I bless You for every step You took along that road of suffering, for every time Your strength gave out.

I bless You for every act of virtue You performed in our behalf, for every longing You felt for our salvation, for every look of love You cast upon Your Blessed Mother and Your friends.

I bless You for every wound inflicted on You by the cruel scourges, for every thorn that pierced Your Brow, for every time Your sacred and adorable Face was spit upon.

For every bond that bound You, for every mockery and insult that was offered You, for every false witness that calumniated You, for every falsehood uttered against You, for every unjust sentence pronounced upon You — for all of these I bless and praise You.

All these blessings, multiplied a thousandfold, I now offer You, my Saviour, and would fain renew them every instant of my life. Amen.

TWENTY-FIFTH TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, MADE OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH.

1st Prelude.—Behold Christ in Gethsemani saying to His Eternal Father : " Not My Will but Thine be done."

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to imitate the conformity of the Sacred Heart to the Divine Will.

COMMENTARY.

In the two preceding invocations we have learned how large a part the Saviour's Sacred Heart had in the work of our Redemption : It bore the largest share in the *humiliations* and in the *sorrows* of His suffering Humanity. We have now to see how, by Its *obedience*, Its *willing acceptance* of these same humiliations and sorrows, It gave to the work of Redemption, viewed from the standpoint of Christ's Sacred Humanity, its chief *merit*. As with us, so, too, with Christ's Sacred Humanity : the *merit* of Its acts was the correlative of their conformity with the Divine Will. St. Thomas says : " All the acts of the other virtues derive their *merit* before God from the fact that they are performed in obedience to the Divine Will " (2, 2, q. 104, a. 3). Nay, more ; so perfect and so agreeable to God was this obedience of the Saviour, that to it St. Paul attributes all the glory of the Name of Jesus, Who, he says, " humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. *For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a Name which is above all other names* " (Phil. ii. 8 *et seq.*).

From these words of St. Paul we gather that the

obedience of the Heart of Jesus in accepting from His Father's hands His humiliations and sorrow had a double merit—viz., that of *freely offered homage*, and, secondly, of the *sacrifice of His human will* to that of His Eternal Father. Such are the two elements that combine to form the merit of the marvellous obedience of the Sacred Heart.

First Source of the Merit of Christ's Obedience —Freely Offered Homage.—St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Gregory, and other high authorities are agreed that obedience has its chief merit in the fact that it is an immolation of the will — man's highest faculty. It must, therefore, be a free and voluntary act. Now, the first condition that marked the obedience of the Saviour was the exercise of His free-will as man : " I lay down My life for My sheep," He says, " . . . No man taketh it away from Me : but I lay it down of Myself " (John x. 15, *et seq.*). Again: "*He humbled Himself*, becoming obedient unto death " (Phil. ii. 8) ; and again : " He was offered because *it was His own Will* " (Isa. liii. 7). In these and many other passages of Scripture the absolute freedom of Christ's human will is asserted beyond all possibility of question. In this unfettered freedom we find the *first* source of the merit of Christ's obedience—the obedience of His Sacred Heart was absolutely perfect, because in the first place it was absolutely free.

Second Source of the Merit of Christ's Obedience —The Sacrifice of His Human Will. — We now advance a further step. The thing commanded may, in itself and apart from obedience, be either pleasing to man's nature or the contrary. In the latter case, other things being equal, the obedience is more meritorious. "When what is commanded," says St. Thomas, " . . . is a thing that, taken in itself, is repugnant to the will, as, for example, when there is question of what is unfavourable or disagreeable, it is manifest, then, that the will accomplishes what is commanded purely by reason of the command itself" (2. 2. Q. 104, a. 2, ad 3). In virtue of this second principle we see that Christ's obedience was supremely meritorious from the fact that not merely did He obey with the utmost promptitude and freedom, but that He obeyed in matters that in themselves were sovereignly distasteful and repugnant to His human Nature. Hence in this present invocation the Sacred Heart is spoken of as " made obedient *unto death.*" Of all things that human nature shrinks from there is, ordinarily speaking, nothing that it dreads so much as *death.* Therefore Christ made the sacrifice of His human will to the Divine Will of His Eternal Father, and that sacrifice was the greatest that can be asked of man—the sacrifice of His life. What it cost His human Nature to make this sacrifice was manifested in a striking manner in the Garden of Olives. His human Nature cried aloud : " Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away." But at once His human will, rising superior to the

shrinkings of poor human nature, added the sublime words: "But yet, not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke xxii. 42). So violent was the shrinking of nature that the struggle caused a wondrous thing to happen—it forced the Blood from its natural channels and drove it like perspiration through the pores of His Sacred Body. This wonderful conformity of Christ was glorious and sublime, and full of merit, in proportion to the greatness of the sufferings He embraced and the intensity of shrinking with which His human Nature shrank from them.

In all this it was His Heart that acted, for the motive power that urged Him on was *love*—the infinite, undying love of His great human Heart of love. "Greater love than this no man hath," He tells us Himself, "that he lay down his life for his friends."

A Difficulty and its Solution. — Lack of space forbids my doing more than alluding in the briefest manner to a difficulty which may have struck the reader. The difficulty is this: Christ received a "*commandment*," He Himself tells us (John x. 18), from His Father regarding His Passion and Death. Hence He had no choice but to accept the death ordained for Him by His Father—*i.e.*, by the Divine Will—for to do otherwise would be an act of disobedience—a sin, and Christ was incapable of sin. How is this to be reconciled with the perfect freedom of Christ's human will? Here, it may be admitted, we are face to face with one of those mysteries which surround the Man-God, and which have their origin in

the fact that He was at the same time both true God and true Man: one Person and two Natures—the Human and the Divine. The learned Cardinal de Lugo seems to solve the difficulty by saying that Christ did, in priority of concept, not receive a *command*, in the strict sense of the word, to die as He did for the redemption of the human race, but rather that the *method* of redemption was left entirely to Christ's free-will as Man, and that it was only *after His free acceptance* of the death of the Cross that the *conditional* Will of the Father in His regard became an *absolute* Will—in other words, that the absolute command existed, in order of concept, only subsequently to its free acceptance on the part of the Messiah.

Other theologians offer solutions of a different kind, whereby they hold that the perfect freedom of Christ's human will is safeguarded. Into these we cannot enter here.

MEDITATION.

Nature, Excellence, and Advantages of Conformity to God's Will.

The practical lesson to be learned from this invocation is conformity to God's holy Will. Regarding this conformity, three things may be considered: its *nature*, its *excellence*, its *advantages*.

1. **Nature of Conformity to God's Will.**—This conformity consists in making God's Will ours. As creatures we are bound to subordinate our will to God's. The servant or the workman is expected to

do his master's will. We belong more entirely to God ; all we have and are belongs in a much higher and more perfect way to Him than the workman, the servant, or even the slave, belongs to his master. Moreover, God's Will is always *best* for us. He loves us with an infinite love, and knows far better than we do ourselves what is really for our highest interest. Hence to know and do God's Will in our regard is what is most to our own profit and advantage.

2. **Excellence of Conformity to God's Will.**—This conformity implies the *practice of all virtues :* it will call on us at one time to practise humility, at another patience, at another mortification, and so on. It is also the *highest perfection.* It means the perfect holocaust of self—the dedication of our entire being to God's service, the unreserved oblation of our love to Him, of which He speaks in the sweet words : *" My son, give Me thy heart "* (Prov. xxiii. 26).

3. **Advantages of Conformity to God's Will.**—It procures us *happiness,* and *holiness,* and *peace :* for who is *happier* than he who wants for nothing, and whose every wish is granted ? " To them that love God all things work together unto good " (Rom. viii. 28). " Whatsoever shall befall the just man it shall not make him sad " (Prov. xii. 21). Who is *holier* than he who in all things does God's Will ? " This is the Will of God, your sanctification " (1 Thess. iv. 3). Who is at greater *peace* than he who dwells for ever united to the " Prince of Peace," and from whose heart and mind is banished

all that makes for discord and unrest? He may say in truth: "In peace in the selfsame I will sleep, and I will rest" (Ps. iv. 9).

TWENTY-SIXTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, PIERCED WITH A LANCE.

1st Prelude. — Behold Longinus piercing the sacred side of the Redeemer with a lance.

2nd Prelude. — Ask grace to learn well the many lessons that this invocation teaches us.

COMMENTARY.

The Reality of the Wound inflicted on the Sacred Heart.—The three preceding invocations deal with Christ's Soul as Man; the present invocation refers to His Sacred Body. St. John writes: "But one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water" (John xix. 34). At once the question arises: What evidence is there to show that the lance pierced the Sacred Heart of Jesus? The Scripture merely asserts that the soldier "opened His *side*." Père de Gallifet, S.J., discusses this question at length, and he arrives at the conclusion that this text of St. John contains an implicit statement that the Divine Heart Itself was pierced by the lance. The phrase, "opened His side," used by the Evangelist is peculiar, and seems to suggest a very broad and very deep wound. That the wound was deep may be inferred from the fact that the "lance" in question was probably the *pilum*, a weapon peculiar

to the Romans, with a sharp point, nine inches in length, such that if it entered on the left, or even on the right, side, it would easily reach the heart (see Smith's *Classical Dictionary*, Art. "Hasta"). Moreover, towards its base the head of the *pilum* was wide enough to cause a very broad wound. Such a wound could scarcely be inflicted without including the heart, which occupies so large a portion of the "side." De Gallifet contends that the word "side" is used in a large sense, as necessarily embracing the heart. In this he finds himself borne out by the testimony alike of tradition, of the Fathers, and of the faithful in general. Though the Church has made no express pronouncement on the subject, its Liturgy, as in the present instance, absolutely presupposes that the Sacred Heart was pierced by the lance. Lastly, the object of the soldier, acting on behalf of the Pharisees, was to make the assurance of Our Lord's death doubly sure. With this in view, he would naturally aim his blow at the most vital part—*i.e.*, the heart. To all this may be added the fact that Our Lord showed the wound of His Sacred Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary.

Benefits flowing from the Wounded Heart of Jesus.—To the merits of this sacred wound is due, in the first place, *the institution of the Sacraments*, especially Baptism, represented by the water, and the Blessed Eucharist, represented by the Blood, that issued from the side of Christ. The opening of the sacred side with a lance was, according to St. Augustine, "the opening, in a manner, of the gate of life, whence issued forth the Sacraments of the

Church" (St. Augustine, Tract 120, *in Joan.*). Secondly, the *Church* itself had its Divine source in that sacred wound. Pope Innocent VI. says: "His side was pierced by the lance in order that by the merits of the streams of blood and water that thence issued should be formed His Immaculate Spouse the Church" (*Office of the Sacred Lance*). Just as Eve was formed from a rib taken from the side of Adam, so the Church, the mystical Eve, was formed from the side of Christ, the Second Adam and true Father of the human race.

The question arises, How did Christ merit after His Death, since merit presupposes free and conscious acceptance of the cause of merit? To this objection à Lapide replies: "You will say that Christ was already dead; hence He could not have merited by the wound of His Sacred Heart. . . . I answer that He did merit. For, while yet living He knew that this wound would be inflicted on His Heart after His Death; consequently He accepted it, and made an offering of it to His Father in our behalf. Hence He merited by this Wound; and through it He accomplished our salvation."

MEDITATION.

St. John, the beloved disciple, dwells with peculiar insistence on the wound of the sacred side of Jesus. He evidently felt that it had a very deep and important meaning. Let us study its meaning. The wound of the Heart of Jesus is, first, a *symbol of love*, and, secondly, a *symbol of grace.*

1. **The Wound of the Heart of Jesus a Symbol of Love.**—St. Bernard says: "The Lord Jesus permitted His breast to be opened by the lance in order that this exterior wound of His Body might serve to reveal the secret of His Heart" (*Sixth Sermon on the Canticles*). In other words, the wound of His Sacred Heart reminds us of the invisible wound of His Love. The drops of Blood and water that issued from His Heart speak to us in eloquent terms of the love that urged Him to shed even the last drop of His Blood for our salvation. Again, St. Bonaventure writes: "The opening of the Heart of Jesus is a proof of His ineffable clemency. No creature is capable of understanding such excess of love; the Angels and Saints are ravished at the sight of such unbounded love. . . . Let us approach the side of Jesus, and let our lips be reddened with the Blood that issues thence. . . . Let our hearts receive It; let them be the precious vases filled with the Saviour's Blood; and inebriated with His sufferings, let us cry aloud: 'Far be it from me to glory save in the Cross of Jesus Christ my Saviour.'"

2. **The Wound of the Heart of Jesus a Symbol of Grace.**—We have already seen that the grace of the Sacraments springs from the wounded Heart of Jesus, and that the grace that nourishes and supports the Church itself has its origin in the same Divine Source. St. Augustine, in the passage already cited (Tract 120, *in Joan.*), adds: "The Blood was shed for the remission of sins; the Water mingles with the Wine of Salvation; they both unite to form a Bath that purifies and a Beverage that re-

freshes." The following is the exquisite comparison of St. Ambrose: "In the land of Engaddi there grows a tree that exhales a precious perfume; unless you pierce the bark the perfume is not felt; but the moment you cut the bark there oozes forth a tiny drop which possesses the sweetest of aromas. Nailed to the Cross, O loving Jesus, You wept over the people, and the people knew not the priceless value of Your tears; but Your Heart was pierced by the blow of the lance, and there issued thence the sweetest perfume; its exquisite aroma spread through the entire world; it was the sweet odour of sanctification, whose source was in Your Sacred Heart, as was the balm that issued from the tree of Engaddi."

TWENTY-SEVENTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, SOURCE OF ALL CONSOLATION.

1st Prelude.—Behold Our Lord saying: "Come to Me, all ye that labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28).

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to seek your consolation in the Sacred Heart.

COMMENTARY.

The Saviour's Heart was pierced by the lance, as we have seen in the last invocation, that It might henceforth be our perennial source of consolation. There is the close connection of cause and effect between the preceding invocations and the present and two following ones, "Our Life and Resurrection," "Our Peace and Reconciliation." The Sacred

Heart is all these things because It was, as we have seen in the preceding invocations, " filled with reproaches," " bruised for our sins," and " made obedient unto death." There is, therefore, a logical sequence in the order in which the titles are placed.

The word " consolation," as contained in this invocation, may be taken either *subjectively* or *objectively*. In its *subjective* sense it means a *disposition of the soul*, and may be defined, in the words of St. Ignatius, in the *Spiritual Exercises*, as " an interior movement caused in the soul, whereby it begins to be inflamed with the love of its Creator and Lord, until at length it can no longer love any created object on earth for itself alone, but only in the Creator of all things. . . . Consolation is every increase of faith, hope, and charity, all interior joy which draws the soul towards heavenly things and to the care of its salvation, giving it tranquillity and peace in its Creator and Lord." It is largely in this subjective sense that the word " consolation " is used in this invocation. In its *objective* sense it signifies the *gifts of the Divine goodness* which engender the above-mentioned dispositions of the soul. In whichever sense you take it, the Sacred Heart is the " Source of all consolation."

1. **First Source of Consolation—the Redemption.**— The Redemption and the graces that flow from it are the one great central source of consolation for the human race. Apart from this there was no hope for mankind. Our race was doomed to everlasting ruin, were it not that He " Who is rich in mercy," by reason of the " exceeding charity wherewith He hath loved us, even when we were dead

in sins . . . hath raised us up . . . that He might show to all ages to come the abundant riches of His grace" (Eph. ii. 4 *et seq.*); so that "where sin abounded grace might still more abound" (Rom. v. 20). This alone fully suffices to show that the Sacred Heart, the source and centre of the "everlasting love" of Christ which was the mainspring of our Redemption, is in truth the source of all our consolation in this vale of tears. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," He says (Jer. xxxi. 3). In these words we find the key to all the mysteries of the Incarnation. It was this superabundant love and consolation flowing from the Sacred Heart that forced from St. Paul the cry of ecstasy: "I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations" (2 Cor. vii. 4), that made St. Francis Xavier exclaim, amidst his overwhelming labours, "Yet more, O Lord, yet more!" or St. John of the Cross, "Grant me to suffer and to be despised for Thee, O Lord"; or St. Teresa, "To suffer or to die." These are the mysterious consolations of the Saints of God.

2. **Second Source of Consolation—the Gift of the Holy Ghost.**—The most precious gift of consolation bestowed on mankind by the Sacred Heart was the gift of the Holy Ghost—the "Comforter," as He is called. This gift of the Holy Ghost was the consummation of the Saviour's mission, the crowning and completion of His work. The early Church, we are told, was "filled with the consolation of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ix. 31); and from that day down to this that Heavenly Source of comfort has never been wanting. To what but to the everlasting love of the Sacred Heart do we owe this priceless

gift? "I have come," He says, "to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke xii. 49). It was through the Holy Ghost that Jesus cast the fire of His Divine love, the sweet fervour of His consolation, into the hearts of men.

3. **Third Source of Consolation—the Sacraments.**—By His Sacraments, too, Jesus sheds His consolations on men's hearts. What sweet peace and comfort take possession of the soul of the repentant sinner in the Sacrament of Penance! What help and consolation does the Sacrament of Extreme Unction bring to the dying in their agony! Above all, what greater source of consolation have we in the world than the Sacramental Presence of the Sacred Heart upon our altars, whether He is the celestial Manna of our souls in Holy Communion, or the Companion of our exile in the Tabernacle, or the Source of all our riches in the Holy Sacrifice? In these and many other ways the Sacred Heart is the "Source of all our consolation," ever calling us to Him in those immortal words of love, "Come to Me, all ye that labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28).

MEDITATION.

There are two kinds of afflictions from which we suffer in this world—*corporal* afflictions and *spiritual* afflictions. In both of these the Sacred Heart is our great source of consolation.

1. **Consolation in Corporal Afflictions.**—St. Matthew tells us that "Jesus went about all Galilee . . . healing

all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people . . . and they presented to Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments . . . and He cured them" (Matt. iv. 23-24); and, again, Jesus, "coming forth, saw a great multitude, and had compassion on them and healed their sick" (Matt. xiv. 14). And as He sat on the hill by the Sea of Galilee "there came to Him great multitudes, having with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the maimed, and many others; and they cast them down at His feet and He healed them: so that the multitude marvelled, seeing the dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see: and they glorified the God of Israel" (Matt. xv. 30). When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus for a sign of His Divine mission, His answer was almost in the words of Isaias: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 5). In short, every page of the Gospel bears eloquent witness to the Saviour's tender pity for every form of bodily suffering. May we not add, with grateful reverence, that in its pages of thanksgivings every number of the *Irish Messenger* bears somewhat similar testimony to the loving goodness of the Sacred Heart?

2. **Consolation in Spiritual Afflictions.**—Yet far more desirous still was Jesus to heal the spiritual maladies of the soul, and to pour the balm of consolation into wounded hearts. Sin is the worst and greatest of all spiritual maladies; and was not the one great object of His mission on earth to call

sinners to repentance? "I have not come to call the just, but sinners," He tells us. If He gives back strength to the body it is also to restore the soul to grace.

Besides sin there are many other sources of affliction which render this world in truth a "vale of tears." In all these sorrows, whether they come from the world, or from ourselves, or from the malice of the devil, the Sacred Heart is ever the source of all our consolation. Let us try, in our turn, to bring comfort to the sorrowful, and we ourselves shall receive consolation in return. Christ has said: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. v. 7).

TWENTY-EIGHTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, OUR LIFE AND RESURRECTION.

1st Prelude.—Imagine you hear Jesus saying to Martha: "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John xi. 25).

2nd Prelude.—Pray that you may always seek in the Sacred Heart, especially in the Blessed Eucharist, your "life and resurrection."

COMMENTARY.

St. John the Evangelist tells us that when Martha of old expressed her doubts to Our Lord as to how He was to raise her brother Lazarus from the dead, Jesus answered her: "*I am the Resurrection and the Life;* he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live" (John xi. 25). And St. Paul says: "When Christ shall appear, *Who is your life;*

then you also shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). In what sense is Christ our Resurrection and Life? This we shall endeavour to explain in the following meditation, while showing at the same time the intimate relations that exist between the Sacred Heart of Jesus and both the spiritual life of our souls, here and especially hereafter, and the resurrection of our body from the sleep of death and from the dust and corruption of the tomb.

It is well to point out here the false interpretation given to the above and similar texts by the Protestant sects. Their contention is, in general terms, that the justice and sanctity of God is the *formal cause* of our justice and sanctification; in other words, that our justice and sanctification are something quite extrinsic to and apart from ourselves. This error is condemned by the Council of Trent (Sess. vi., cap. 7, and Can. 10). Our justice and sanctification are our own: they are the gift of God which is within us, the spiritual life of our souls which is our greatest treasure; they are also God's, in this sense, that they come to us from God, through the merits of Christ, "without Whom we can do nothing"—we are entirely dependent on God's goodness for the possession of this priceless gift. This is the sense in which we say that Christ is our sanctification, our redemption, and so forth; and in the present instance that He is "our Life and Resurrection."

1. The Sacred Heart Our Life.

The Sacred Heart is our "Life"—*i.e.*, the cause of the spiritual life of our souls—

1. **Because of the Merits of the Redeemer.**—" The Word made Flesh " is the source of all our spiritual life, " the light " that " shineth in darkness." " *In Him,*" says St. John (John i.), " *was life,* and the life was the light of men "; and " as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God "—*i.e.*, to live the life of grace in God. The same Apostle says : " As the Father raiseth up the dead, and *giveth life ; so the Son also giveth life to whom He will* " (John v. 21). In His wonderful and touching prayer for His disciples at the Last Supper, Jesus said : " Father, the hour is come ; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He may *give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him.* Now this is eternal life : That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent " (John xvii. 1-3). And the Eternal Father granted in a wonderful manner this loving and fervent prayer, coming straight from the burning Heart of Love of His Divine Son. Through the merits of the Redeemer the human race, buried in the sleep of death owing to Adam's sin, was restored to the life of grace : " Because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world *that we may live by Him* " (1 John iv. 9). " I am come," says Christ, " that they may have *life,* and may have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd . . . and I lay down My life for My sheep " (John x. 10 *et seq.*). It is to the beloved disciple, the Apostle of the Sacred Heart, that we are mainly indebted for the development of this thought of how entirely and truly Jesus is the life of our souls.

2. **Because it is through the Sacred Humanity of Christ that God communicates Life to Our Souls.**—Turning again to the beautiful discourse of Jesus at the Last Supper, as set forth in the Gospel of St. John, we find this truth revealed to us in the striking comparison of the vine and the branches. "I am the Vine," says Christ, "you the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing" (John xv. 5). As the branches draw their sap from the parent stem, so do we draw all our spiritual life from the Sacred Heart. Sever the connection between stem and branches, and the branches die; so sever the connection between us and Christ, and our spiritual life departs. The more closely we are united to the Sacred Heart the stronger and more vigorous is our spiritual life, and the greater the amount of fruit we bear in God's sweet service. From the Sacred Heart come all the graces that we need to save and sanctify our souls. From our close union with It we shall draw the Divine sap of actual and sanctifying grace that will enable us to bring forth the richest fruits of sanctification in ourselves and others. Through the medium of the Sacraments, and especially the Blessed Eucharist, and through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus, the Sacred Vine, communicates to us, the branches—members of the one true Church—this living sap that is our spiritual life and strength.

II. The Sacred Heart our Resurrection.

The Sacred Heart is also "our Resurrection"—*i.e.*, the cause of our return from death to life. This

resurrection is twofold—the resurrection of the *soul* and the resurrection of the *body*.

1. **The Resurrection of the Soul.**—As sanctifying grace is the life of the soul, so is grievous sin its death. Consequently the transition from the state of sin to that of sanctifying grace may truly be termed its "resurrection." Owing to the sin of our first parents, the entire human race was dead. The effect of the Redemption was to raise it from this state of spiritual death, and this work of Redemption sprang, as we have seen in former meditations, from the superabounding love of the Sacred Heart. Those who lived before the coming of Christ were saved by the anticipated merits of their future Redeemer. Even after the work of Redemption was accomplished the human soul comes into existence in the state of original sin. It is only when the merits of the Redeemer are applied to it in Baptism that its spiritual life begins. Furthermore, it may, by its personal act, after Baptism, forfeit the gift of sanctifying grace by mortal sin. And here another Sacrament steps in—the Sacrament of Penance—to restore it once again to life. In all these instances the Sacred Heart—the motive power of Redemption and of all the graces it procures us—may in truth be called "Our Resurrection."

2. **The Resurrection of the Body.**—The death of the body is the chastisement of sin. Even Christ willed that His Body should die. Yet Christ's Resurrection, of His own power, is the gauge and model of our future resurrection at the last day. Furthermore, in the reception of the Blessed

Eucharist we find the source and germ, as it were, of the future glorious resurrection of our body from the dead. For the Blessed Eucharist not merely sanctifies the soul : it also sanctifies and, in a manner, spiritualizes the body as well.* Christ has said : " He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life : and *I will raise him up in the last day*" (John vi. 55) ; and again : " He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever " (*ibid.* 59).

3. **Why attribute all this to the Sacred Heart** ?— You may say, perhaps : " I understand why *Christ* is called our Life and Resurrection, but what reason is there for attributing these blessings in a special manner to His *Sacred Heart?*" The answer is : (1) That it is right and natural to attribute to the Sacred Heart in particular the benefits that flow from the *love* and *charity* of the Redeemer. (2) The Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and, above all, the Holy Eucharist, which, as I have said, are instrumental causes of our life and resurrection, have their source in the *love* and, therefore, in a certain sense, in the *Heart* of Jesus Christ. (3) The Heart of Jesus, living in the Eucharist, participates most largely in the vivifying influence whereby that most Blessed Sacrament implants within the body the germs of its future resurrection from the grave. Lastly, Jesus, appearing in the Host to Blessed Margaret Mary, bade her offer thanks to His Sacred Heart in particular for all the blessings granted to us in the Eucharist ; above all, for Its being the source and fountain of the spiritual life of our souls.

* See the present writer's book on *Frequent and Daily Communion*, chapter treating of the effects of the Blessed Eucharist.

MEDITATION.

The Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist is our Life and our Resurrection.

The Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist Our Life.—(1) Because, beyond all else, It increases our stock of sanctifying grace, which is our most precious treasure, which gives renewed life and vigour to the soul. (2) Because It frees the soul from venial sin. "This Sacrament," says the Council of Trent, "is an antidote whereby we are freed from daily faults" (Sess. xiii., chap. ii.); and St. Ambrose speaks of it as "that daily bread taken as a remedy for daily infirmity." (3) Because It preserves the soul from mortal sin. The Council of Trent just cited (*ibid.*) calls this Sacrament "an antidote whereby . . . we are *preserved from mortal sins.*" (4) Because It unites us most closely with Christ, the Author of life, according to His own Divine words. "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him" (John vi. 57).

The Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist Our Resurrection.—St. Thomas says that this Sacrament "leads us to our everlasting home, and *reanimates the body to eternal life*"; and Christ Himself has said: "He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever"; and again: "I shall raise him up at the last day." "There will remain," says Bossuet, "in the dead body a germ of life that no corruption can destroy; it will retain within it the impress of life that nothing can efface" (Bossuet, *Meditations*,

51e jour). Let us, then, seek in the Blessed Eucharist the spiritual life and vigour of our soul and the pledge of a glorious resurrection for the body. In this Sacrament, wrote Blessed Margaret Mary, " I receive the God of my heart and the Heart of my God."

TWENTY-NINTH TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, OUR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION.

1st Prelude.—Imagine Our Lord saying to you personally: " Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your soul " (Matt. xi. 29).

2nd Prelude.—Say fervently: " Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, give us peace " (*Prayer of Mass*).

COMMENTARY.

Peace is defined by St. Augustine as " *the tranquillity of order.*" Order connotes the existence of certain relations; tranquillity consists in the due observance of these relations. Now, the peace of our soul depends on the proper observance of four sets of relations—*i.e.*, with *God*, by love and conformity to His Divine Will; with *men*, by justice and charity; with *ourselves*, by the due subordination of the body to the soul, of the inferior appetites to reason; with *inferior creatures*, by making them subservient to our last end. The better we observe these four relations, the greater our peace of soul. In Heaven alone shall we enjoy this peace in its perfection. On earth, even its imperfect possession is an unspeakable blessing, the nearest approach to true happiness. Again and again Christ wished it to His disciples: " Pax

vobis" (Peace be to you) was His frequent form of address. "*Peace* I leave you, My *peace* I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid" (John xiv. 27). "Learn of Me . . . and you will find *rest* to your souls" (Matt. xi. 29). The Church in its Liturgy prays again and again for peace: "Dona nobis pacem" (Give us peace). "May the *peace* of the Lord be always with you," etc.

Now, the Sacred Heart is called "our peace and reconciliation" in the same sense as, in the last meditation, we saw It was called "our life and resurrection"—*i.e.*, the Sacred Heart is the *cause* of our peace and reconciliation. "He is our peace," says St. Paul (Eph. ii. 14) ". . . that He might reconcile" us to God. This peace-making influence of the Saviour we attribute to His Sacred Heart in particular because of the reasons enumerated in the last meditation for His being our "life and resurrection." To these reasons may be added that our "peace and reconciliation" are the direct result of the shedding of the Precious Blood, which has Its source and well-spring in the Sacred Heart; moreover, the work of pacification and reconciliation is peculiarly the outcome of the *love*, and therefore of the *Heart*, of the Redeemer.

I. The Sacred Heart our Peace.

1. **By removing the Obstacles to Peace of Soul.**—These obstacles are sin and its consequences. Where sin reigns there can be no real peace of soul, for "to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful" (Wisd. xiv. 9). One sin brought ruin on the human race; one sin may send the soul to Hell for all

eternity. By sin the soul breaks off its proper relations with God, and therefore ceases to have peace. God's vengeance pursues it, punishes it, threatens it with Hell, withdraws from it the precious gift of sanctifying grace. But the Sacred Heart, the overflowing Fountain of mercy and of all graces, comes to its assistance. Like to the Good Samaritan of old, It applies to that poor wounded soul the oil of grace and sanctification. You have sinned, no doubt, " but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ " (1 Cor. vi. 11). The Sacred Heart, all full of love and tenderest forgiveness, has welcomed back with joy the poor, strayed, contrite prodigal, and restored to him in full the happiness and blessings of his Father's home.

2. **By creating the Necessary Conditions for Peace of Soul.**—These conditions are three—namely (1) *Purity of heart.* To be in the grace, and consequently in the friendship, of God, is the first essential condition of peace of heart. This, as we have seen, comes from devotion to the Sacred Heart, which of its very nature expels sin and cannot co-exist with sin. Furthermore, command over the passions and emotions of the mind is necessary for peace, together with a certain degree of freedom from inordinate affections and of detachment from creatures. This condition is fostered and strengthened by devotion to the Sacred Heart. (2) *Light to the mind* to " know the things that are given us from God " (1 Cor. ii. 12), and thus to rise above the darkness and deception of this world, into the calm serene knowledge of God's goodness and of

our infinite indebtedness to Him. (3) *A certain sense of security and confidence in the possession of God's gifts and graces*, so that with the Apostle we can, in some sense, feel assured that "no creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God" (Rom. viii. 39). These three conditions are the outcome of the presence of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, sent to dwell within our souls, as He was sent upon the Twelve of old, by the loving, tender goodness of the Sacred Heart.

II. The Sacred Heart Our Reconciliation.

Our "reconciliation" or justification is due to what St. Paul calls the "abundant riches" of God's grace, poured down into our souls through the infinite merits and all-powerful intercession of the Sacred Heart. It was this efficacious grace, as it is termed, flowing from the Heart of Christ that changed the soul of Magdalen and instantly transformed her into a Saint; that wrought the wondrously rapid transformation of Levi into the Apostle Matthew; that made a lifelong penitent of Peter; that opened Heaven in an instant to the dying thief. Jesus said His mission was to call the sinner to repentance. And in these latter days we find Him promising the Blessed Margaret Mary that "sinners shall find in My Heart an infinite ocean of mercy"; that "the tepid shall grow fervent and the fervent rise to higher perfection"; that those who propagate devotion to His Sacred Heart "shall have their names inscribed therein;" and that those who in His honour communicate on nine first Fridays in succession shall receive the

graces of repentance and of final perseverance in His love. In short, the one great, everlasting longing of the Sacred Heart is our "reconciliation" with His Father and our final admission to the everlasting bliss of Heaven. For this He lived on earth, for this He died, for this He dwells throughout the ages in the Tabernacle.

MEDITATION.

Peace, says St. Augustine, is serenity of mind, tranquillity of soul, simplicity of heart, the bond of charity.

1. **Serenity of Mind.**—Our mind is like the sky, that may be either resplendent with sunshine or darkened with clouds. The clouds are gloomy thoughts, rash judgments, suspicions, uncharitable feelings—all, in short, that destroys interior peace.

2. **Tranquillity of Soul.**—Our tranquillity is disturbed by thoughts about the *past*—its faults, failures, and mishaps; the *present*—its troubles and sorrows; the *future*—its possibilities and apprehensions. The *remedy* for all this is confidence in God, conformity to His holy Will, abandonment to the guidance and protection of Providence.

3. **Simplicity of Heart.**—This may be defined as an active spirit of faith, which makes us simple, sincere, and straightforward in our relations with God and with our neighbour.

4. **The Bond of Charity.**—To have peace of heart there must be *charity* in *thought*—avoiding envy, suspicion, jealousy, and all that embitters the mind; in *word*—avoiding calumny, detraction, unkindness

of speech ; in *action*—by being kindly and thoughtful in act towards others, even generous and self-sacrificing at times, and free from selfishness.

All these things we shall find in Him Who was " meek and humble of heart "; Who was the " Prince of Peace "; Who came to give " peace on earth to men of good-will "; and Who so often invoked the sweet blessing of peace on His disciples of old.

THIRTIETH TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, VICTIM OF OUR SINS.

1st Prelude.—Imagine you behold Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist as the Paschal Lamb about to be immolated for the sins of men.

2nd Prelude.—Say with humble reverence : " Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us " (*Prayer of the Mass*).

COMMENTARY.

We have now reached the first of the invocations belonging to the concluding section of the Litany. This section contains four invocations, which regard four different classes of persons—*i.e.*, sinners, the faithful, the dying, the elect of Heaven.

The present invocation may be taken in either of two senses : the Sacred Heart is the Victim *offered for sinners ;* It is also the Victim perpetually *afflicted and bruised by their offences.* Which of these meanings are we to adopt ? Taken in the first sense, this invocation becomes almost synonymous with the twenty-second invocation—" Heart of

Jesus, atonement for our iniquities." The second sense appears more in keeping with that of the three following invocations ; besides which it more immediately suggests the idea of *reparation* for the ingratitude of sinners, which is one of the fundamental objects of devotion to the Sacred Heart. We may, perhaps, in a manner, be able to combine both senses in the following meditation.

The Sacred Heart the Victim of our Sins.

1. **In His Suffering Humanity on Earth.**—If man had never sinned, would God the Son have become man ? Given that He did become man, would He have lived a humble, suffering life and died as He did ? These are questions none save God Himself can answer. All we know is that as the offence was infinite, so too should be the atonement, and that God alone could offer an infinite atonement. This was the object of His coming : " For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost " (Luke xix. 10). Yet Christ might have accomplished His Divine purpose without so entirely annihilating Himself as He did ; without embracing a life of such extreme poverty, suffering, and humiliation ; without adding to all this the terrible sufferings and humiliations of His Passion and Death. Quite true ; but yet He willed to make a reparation, to display a generosity, to evince a depth of love, worthy of the Godhead. His love and generosity would be infinite in their superabundance, the worthy outcome of the infinite, unbounded goodness of His Sacred Heart. And so He listened to the dictates of that Heart alone. Hence measureless

were the depths of suffering and humiliation to which, with Godlike generosity and love, He abandoned Himself. He was, in truth, the Victim of sinners in His mortal life on earth.

2. **In His Glorified Humanity in Heaven.**—"Always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25) before the throne of the Most High, Jesus, impelled by the everlasting love of His Sacred Heart, ever shows His adorable Wounds to His Eternal Father, and offers to Him the infinite merits of His Life and Passion and Death in our behalf. The strong, clear cry of the Saviour—the friend and advocate of sinners—goes up with irresistible power to God's throne for sinners; the Precious Blood that flowed so copiously on Calvary is loud-voiced in its all-powerful appeal for them. The everlasting longing of the Sacred Heart in Heaven, His ceaseless cry to His Eternal Father is for mercy—mercy, mercy for the helpless sinner, for the dying sinner. It is in truth the Victim ever offered for their sins.

3. **In His Sacramental Presence on the Altar.**—But it is on our altars, above all, that the Sacred Heart is the Victim of Sinners—their Victim in two senses. He is the Victim of their coldness, their ingratitude—nay, of their atrocious and deliberate malice. He is absolutely helpless in their hands. His enemies may tear His Sacred Person from the Tabernacle, they may outrage Him in every way, and trample Him beneath their feet; they may insult Him and blaspheme His holy Name; they may use Him with more atrocious cruelty and outrage than did the impious Jews or the wicked Roman soldiers in

the past. He is silent now as then ; He will not raise a hand to stop them, though Nature sometimes rises to avenge Him, as it did so recently at St. Pierre and in Sicily. He is, in truth, the Victim of sinners.

And in another sense He is their Victim also. In the Holy Sacrifice, at every moment of the day and night, and on a million altars, all the world over, He is offered up in their behalf, a sacrifice of priceless value to draw down upon His erring children, the poor strayed sheep of His fold, the graces of repentance and amendment—the great, strong, efficacious grace that saves from Hell.

And in the lonely, silent vigils of His watchful love within the Tabernacle, that Heart, so full of tenderest love for wayward sinners, prays, with, oh, such wealth of powerful and tender pleading, for the souls of sinners that have cost Him dear! Such bitter pangs of agony, such streams of Precious Blood, such overwhelming sorrows, such profound humiliations—are they all to be in vain, and powerless to save poor sinners from the wrath to come? They are His, and His great Heart of Mercy is breaking for their loss. He would rescue them at any cost, if they would only pause and listen to the inspirations of His all-merciful and loving Heart.

MEDITATION.

Our Duties towards the Sacred Heart, the Victim of our Sins.

Our chief duties towards the Sacred Heart, the Victim of our Sins, may be reduced to three—reparation, thanksgiving, zeal.

1. **Reparation.**—"I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none: and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none" (Ps. lxviii. 21), is the touching lament that King David places on the lips of Christ. It cannot fail to touch a responsive chord in the soul of every client of the Sacred Heart. Jesus Himself addressed, it is said, these words to Blessed Margaret Mary: "My justice is irritated and ready to inflict punishment on hidden sinners, if they do not do penance. Therefore raise thy heart and hands towards Heaven in prayer and good works. Cease not to present Me to My Eternal Father as a *Victim of love*, immolated and offered for the sins of the entire world. Place My Divine Heart like a rampart, as it were, between His justice and sinners, in order to obtain mercy for them." In truth, the more we reflect on the outrages offered to the Sacred Heart by sinners, the more we shall be urged to acts of reparation for them. This is one of the main objects of devotion to the Sacred Heart, to make atonement for the coldness, the forgetfulness, of so many of His so-called friends, and the malice and the bitter, relentless persecution of His enemies.

2. **Thanksgiving.** — The practical and grateful recognition of the boundless goodness of the Sacred Heart, and of the stupendous and innumerable benefits and blessings He has heaped upon us, is our second duty. In the Holy Sacrifice we have an ample means of paying off this debt. We can offer this precious gift of the Divine Son to His Eternal Father—nay, we can offer to Jesus His own adorable and precious Body and Blood as an infinite

sacrifice of thanksgiving, fully adequate to pay off even such a debt of thanksgiving as we and all the human race are under, for so many and such boundless benefits received.

3. **Zeal.**—Zeal for souls, zeal for the interests and the honour of the Sacred Heart, zeal to make Its Life-Blood fruitful in the hearts of those for whom It bled—this is pre-eminently the spirit of the apostleship of prayer, the one great aim, and purpose, and ambition of its members. Let us see that we are animated with this zeal, that we are something more than members of this great association in mere name and outward seeming ; that we really take to heart the interests—the dear interests—of the Sacred Heart ; and that we pray and strive, in season and out of season, in all the many ways that the apostleship provides us with, to promote these interests in ourselves and others.

THIRTY-FIRST TITLE : HEART OF JESUS, SALVATION OF THOSE WHO HOPE IN THEE.

1st Prelude.—Imagine Our Lord explaining to Blessed Margaret Mary the nature of devotion to His Sacred Heart, and saying to her these words : " Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, and they shall never be effaced."

2nd Prelude.—Ask grace to have unbounded trust in the Sacred Heart.

COMMENTARY.

There is one of what are familiarly known as " The Promises of the Sacred Heart "—namely, the

twelfth, or the "*Great Promise*," as it is sometimes called—which seems to throw special light on the meaning and application of the invocation of the Litany we are now considering. It runs as follows:

"I promise thee, in the excess of the mercy of My Heart, that Its all-powerful love will grant to all those who shall receive Communion on the first Fridays of nine consecutive months the final grace of repentance; they shall not die under My displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour."

Before examining the bearing of this promise on our present invocation, we must recall the following considerations:

1. Final perseverance is a gratuitous gift of God's goodness, and cannot be merited as an acquired right by any individual act of ours (Trent, sess. vi., cap. vi., can. 16 and 22). It is rather given as the reward for a series of acts continued to the end: "He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved" (Matt. x. 22).

2. No one in this life can have an absolute certainty of his salvation.

3. Final perseverance can be procured by prayer possessing the requisite qualifications, and backed up by good works. Christ has again and again promised to hear our prayers: "Ask, and ye shall receive," etc.; "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name," etc. Of all things that we can ask, final perseverance is immeasurably the most important object of our prayers.

Bearing these considerations in mind, we turn to

the "Great Promise." It contains three parts: (1) the *source* from which the favour springs—*i.e.*, the "excess of mercy" and the "all-powerful love" of the Sacred Heart; (2) the *condition* to which the favour is attached—*i.e.*, the receiving of nine Communions on the first Fridays of nine consecutive months, in honour of the Sacred Heart; (3) the *favour* itself—*i.e.*, "the final grace of repentance"; to which are subjoined the constituent elements of final perseverance: "They shall not die under My displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments [*gallicé*, "leurs sacraments," as found in the two places in which this promise is set down by Blessed Margaret Mary], and My Heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour."

1. **The Source.**—The phrases "excess of mercy" and "all-powerful love" are remarkable, and suggest something very exceptional in the nature of the promise. That mercy may well be called "excessive" which promises salvation to the just or sinners without distinction, on conditions which seem so easy of accomplishment. Yet God is master of His gifts. St. Paul quotes the Divine words addressed of old to Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," etc. From which the Apostle draws the conclusion, "Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will" (Rom. ix. 15 *et seq.*). The "all-powerful love" of the Sacred Heart is able, if He will, to obtain from the goodness of His Eternal Father such an exceptional grace of salvation as this—able, too, to bend His creature's will to His designs without doing any violence to our free-will. For God can always give a grace such that, as He

foresees, man will yield to it, and, if necessary, be converted. There is nothing to hinder God, in reward for the performance of a given act—in the present instance the making, under certain specific conditions, of nine first Friday Communions—from granting on the bed of death a grace such as, without forcing man's free-will, to infallibly secure his conversion and final repentance. Or else God can give as a reward the grace of final perseverance in their good dispositions to such as habitually lead good lives. How many there are who begin life well and end it badly! Such a grace is neither merited nor given as an acquired right, but purely out of God's "excess of mercy." "Who can resist the Will of God," when He chooses to "show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory"? (Rom. ix. 23).

2. **The Condition.**—This is so clearly and precisely laid down that there can be no misunderstanding it. It consists in the reception of Holy Communion, with proper dispositions, in honour of the Sacred Heart, on the first Fridays of nine consecutive months. The performance of this condition implies a very considerable degree of perseverance, and often means the overcoming of many obstacles and difficulties. Hence this condition contains an element of steadfastness and determined fidelity in God's service.

3. **The Favour Itself.**—"The final grace of repentance" means a happy death and a blessed eternity. The phrase, "they shall not die without

receiving *their Sacraments*" is peculiar. "Their Sacraments" does not necessarily mean what are termed "the Last Sacraments." Many who have made the nine Fridays have been known to die without them. For such persons their last Confession and Communion were their "Last Sacraments." Sudden death may be a grace. God may foresee that for certain persons an ordinary death would prove dangerous to salvation—that they would yield to despair or some other dangerous temptation on the bed of death.

It must be borne in mind that this promise does not afford an absolute certainty of salvation. It merely gives that confidence which amounts to *moral* certainty. *First*, because the veracity of the promise itself rests upon merely human evidence, and can therefore only engender a belief that is natural and human as opposed to what is supernatural. There is no question whatever of the certainty of Catholic *faith*. *Secondly*, because, as already stated, no one is absolutely certain of salvation. Even St. Paul, despite his wondrous revelations, felt no absolute certainty of his salvation. "I am not conscious to myself of anything," he said, "yet am I not hereby justified" (1 Cor. iv. 4); and he bids us to work out our salvation "with fear and trembling." He dreads lest, after he has preached to others, he himself should become a castaway. Yet if any of the Saints felt assured of his salvation, it was St. Paul. We are extremely weak. Of ourselves we can do nothing. This utter distrust of self, this keen consciousness of our utter inconstancy and instability, and the

consequent uncertainty as to our own future behaviour in God's service are quite consistent with that entire trust in God's goodness which says: "I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). He who is thus disposed is very far from yielding to presumption, or saying to himself: "I have made the nine Fridays: I am safe now; no matter what I do, I shall be saved." On the contrary, if he has made his Communions in the proper dispositions, Divine grace has filled him with a clearer knowledge of his weakness, and taught him to lean more entirely for help on God. And when the final hour comes he will find an "assured refuge" in the Sacred Heart, and will experience "how sweet a thing it is to die after having had a constant devotion to the Heart of Him Who is to be his Judge," and how truly is the Sacred Heart "the salvation of those who hope in It." *Thirdly*, to all this it may be added that no one has more than a *moral* certainty that he has fulfilled the conditions of the "Great Promise"—that, for example, his Communions were made in the state of grace, since "man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Eccles. ix. 1). Thus the objections sometimes urged on theological grounds against this promise are devoid of force.

MEDITATION.

The Sacred Heart is "the Salvation of those who hope in It (1) because of Its *goodness*; (2) because of Its *fidelity*.

1. **The Goodness of the Sacred Heart.**—" Have you ever considered what the Heart of Jesus Christ is ?" writes Muzarelli. " It is the Heart of the Man-God hypostatically united to the Divinity ; It is therefore a Heart completely penetrated with the infinite love with which the Divine Word Itself is eternally consumed for us ; the love that urged Him to come down on earth among the children of men, and be as one of them. It is a Heart that has been, and still is, the material instrument of the noblest affections of the most holy Soul of Jesus Christ, and that beats in unison with the natural emotions of this infinite love. Hence It is a Heart most full of sympathy for our afflictions and our sorrows. It is the Heart of the tenderest of fathers, the most devoted of friends and brothers ; the Heart of the gentlest, the most powerful, the most liberal of Kings that ever lived. In short, It is the Heart of Jesus Christ, the King of Heaven and earth." What, then, must be the boundless charity and goodness of this Divine Heart ? How completely we should trust in It because of Its unbounded goodness, and because It is omnipotent in Its ability to help us !

2. **The Fidelity of the Sacred Heart.**—Listen to the words of Blessed Margaret Mary : " The Sacred Heart of Our Lord has made known to me," she writes, " that the pleasure that It takes in being known, loved, and honoured by His creatures is so great that It has promised me that *no one who embraces this devotion and is truly devout to this Sacred Heart will ever perish.*" And again : " Ah, if you only knew how great a happiness it is to love Him and to be beloved by Him ! *No one who is*

peculiarly devout to Him will ever perish. Ah, how sweet it is to die after having had a constant devotion to the Heart of Him Who is to be our Judge!" (*Letters of Blessed Margaret Mary*).

THIRTY-SECOND TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, HOPE OF THOSE WHO DIE IN THEE.

1st Prelude.—"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me—write: *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord*" (Apoc. xiv. 13). Imagine you behold St. John hearing this voice and writing down these words.

2nd Prelude.—Ask the grace of a happy death in the Sacred Heart.

COMMENTARY.

1. **Who are Those Who Die in the Sacred Heart?**—Commenting on the words of the Apocalypse, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," à Lapide says that these words "refer to all holy persons in general, whether confessors or martyrs. For all these are happy because they die *in the Lord*,—that is to say, in the faith and charity, the grace and friendship of God. . . . Hence St. Bernard says: 'To die *for the Lord* is the happiness of the Martyrs; to die *in the Lord* is that of the confessors of Christ.'" To die in the Sacred Heart means, therefore, to die in the peace and friendship of the Sacred Heart—to die in the state of close and intimate union with the Heart of Jesus, by being possessed of a high degree of sanctifying grace and love of God. The present title differs from the last in this, among others things, that it refers

more especially to the *just*, while the previous title may also refer in large degree to *sinners*. This title seems to presuppose a life, or, at any rate, a prolonged period of fervent and faithful service of the Sacred Heart, and of devotion to Its interests. It seems to formulate in other terms the words addressed by Blessed Margaret Mary to her Director : " Ah, how sweet a thing it is to die after having had a constant devotion to the Heart of Him Who is to be our Judge !" The deeper and more persevering our devotion to the Sacred Heart has been through life, the more we have been zealous and energetic in labouring for Its interests, and advancing Its honour ; in short, the more whole-hearted and single-minded we have been in consecrating our best energies to Its service, the greater will be the hope and confidence that we shall have in It at death.

2. **In what Manner is the Sacred Heart the " Hope " of Those who Die in It ?**—To this it may be answered : *First*, that in reward of its faithful service of His Sacred Heart, Our Blessed Lord powerfully fosters and strengthens in the soul at death the theological virtue of hope, by giving it at that supreme moment a very keen and vivid appreciation of His goodness and mercy as Our Redeemer, and of the immense power of the gifts and graces which He won for us by His Redemption. *Secondly*, this increase and strengthening within us of the virtue of hope fortifies us against the temptations of despair that at times assail some souls at the approach of death. *Lastly*, by the very special graces He bestows on the faithful clients of His Sacred Heart at death, Our Lord assuages the suffering and the sadness that would

lessen hope, and sweetens by His secret unction, by the loving confidence and trust that He infuses into holy souls, the bitterness of their departure from this life.

3. **The Happiness of Dying in these Dispositions.**—A happy death—that is to say, a death in the grace and love of God—is an unspeakable grace. It means a happy eternity. But if to this is added the grace of such a calm, reposeful trust in the loving, tender mercy of Jesus Christ, as banishes all fear about the future of the dying person in eternity, and enables him to look upon the coming judgment as the happy and triumphant meeting with that Saviour Who has been the dearest and most intimate object of his tender love and devoted service throughout life—if all this is superadded to the humble assurance of being in the grace of God, death assuredly has lost its terrors, and become but a blissful passage into everlasting life. If the faithful client of the Sacred Heart looks back from his bed of death upon the past, the vanished years present a record of work done for God, of difficulties overcome, and sacrifices made, and labour undergone in promoting the interests—the dear interests—of that Heart of Love. The very agony and pain of death is sweetened and assuaged by consolations coming from the dying Saviour's Heart. The mists of death are dissipated by the rays of coming glory penetrating through the veil that separates eternity from time. No wonder that such a one should say with Father Suarez, "I never knew it was so sweet a thing to die," or with Blessed Margaret Mary, "Ah, how sweet it is to die after having had a

constant devotion to the Heart of Him Who is to be our Judge!" "Beati mortui, sui in Domino moriuntur" (Blessed, indeed, are they that die in the Sacred Heart).

MEDITATION.

The Sacred Heart is for those who, through life, have been devoted to It—the *strength*, the *courage* and the *joy* of those who die in It.

1. **The Sacred Heart the Strength of those who Die in It.**—There is no time in one's whole career when spiritual strength is more needed than at the hour of death. The failing of the physical powers, the pain, the weariness, the tedium of the last sickness, leave the soul more than usually exposed to the assaults of the devil. Moreover, it is the last chance that Satan will ever have, and he endeavours to use it to the best advantage. Hence the urgent need of spiritual strength at that last hour. This is what the Sacred Heart grants in abundance to Its clients. "I will be their secure refuge at the hour of death" is His consoling promise; and again, "Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written on My Heart, never to be effaced"; and yet again, "They shall not die under my displeasure." This fortifying of the soul consists mainly in the strengthening within it of the three great theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, and the granting in abundance of the actual graces that will enable it to win an easy victory over its assailants.

O, most loving Heart of Jesus, strengthen and

support me by Thy powerful and copious graces at the hour of my death. Heart of my Redeemer, once in bitter agony upon the Cross, grant me in profusion in my dying hour those superabundant graces Thou didst merit for me by Thy Sacred Passion and Death. And thou, my mother Mary, and St. Joseph, and my angel guardian, stand beside me and protect me in my passage to eternity. "Let my soul die the death of the just" (Num. xxiii. 10).

2. **The Sacred Heart the Courage of those who Die in It.**—What is it that makes the dying soul afraid? It is the thought of past sin, and the apprehension of future punishment. Now, in the case of those who die in the Sacred Heart these two sources of fear are annihilated or reduced to a minimum. Sin there may have been, but it has been atoned for by long years, it may be, of generous and devoted service of the Sacred Heart. He who through life has laboured for the interests of the Heart of Christ need have no fear when death approaches. That Divine Heart will be his "hope" to comfort and support him with the grace, and love, and courage that will banish fear, and enable him to enter the dread portals with the most entire confidence and loving trustfulness in God's unbounded mercy, and most tender goodness.

Most tender and most loving Heart of Jesus, be with me to encourage and uphold me on my bed of death! Kindle in my poor cold heart, at that last moment, such a burning flame of love as may consume away all love of earth, and draw me sweetly and irresistibly to Thee alone.

3. **The Sacred Heart the Joy of those who Die in It.**—When harvest time is drawing near, the labourer rejoices that now at length he is about to reap the rich reward of all his year's hard work. The thought of the abundant harvest that awaits him is an ample consolation for the toils and sufferings of the year that has elapsed.

Feelings, not unlike to these, give joy and gladness to the soul of him who in the past has laboured in the interests of the Sacred Heart. The days of labour and of suffering are now drawing to a close; the Everlasting Harvest is at hand, when "nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more" (Apoc. xxi. 4), and when, amid the entrancing sweetness of the "New Jerusalem," the soul shall lose itself in never-ending and rapturous contemplation of the beauties of the Sacred Heart. Even on the bed of death a foretaste of this blissful happiness is oftentimes the lot of those who in the past have shown themselves the faithful clients of the Heart of Christ.

Sweet, loving Heart of my Redeemer, may I feel the joy and sweetness of Thy presence in my dying hour. Let Thy blessed Mother and St. Joseph, and Thy Saints and angels, be around me to comfort and console me at that moment; and do Thou, sweet Heart of Jesus, take me to Thyself to reign with Thee in bliss for evermore.

THIRTY-THIRD AND LAST TITLE: HEART OF JESUS, DELIGHT OF ALL THE SAINTS.

1st Prelude.—Imagine you behold Our Blessed Lord in Heaven, radiant and with celestial glory, according to the words of the Apocalypse: "And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and *the Lamb is the lamp thereof*" (Apoc. xxi. 23).

2nd Prelude.—Pray that here on earth you may learn to seek your happiness in the Sacred Heart so that hereafter It may be the source of your everlasting bliss in Heaven.

COMMENTARY.

The Sacred Heart may be considered under three aspects: first, in the past, as participating in the sorrows, joys, labours, and sufferings of the mortal life of Jesus Christ on earth; secondly, as It lives, and acts, and feels in the Blessed Eucharist, on our altars, and in our tabernacles; thirdly, as It shares in the happiness and glory of the Sacred Humanity of Christ in Heaven. It is in this latter aspect that we consider the Sacred Heart in this the last invocation of the Litany.

1. **The Sacred Heart, the Delight of the Saints in Heaven.** — Commenting on the words of the Apocalypse, "The Lamb is the lamp thereof," cited above (in the 1st Prelude), à Lapide says: "The lamp which enlightens and rejoices the bodily eyes of the elect is the most brilliant and glorious humanity of Christ, which, like the moon in its full splendour, diffuses its light through the empyrean

Heaven, so that the eyes of the Saints are enabled by the aid of this celestial light to contemplate the glorious Humanity of Christ, the beauty of their fellow-Saints, and of all that is in Heaven, together with their own particular perfection, from all of which they derive the most supreme delight and purest happiness." To understand in what manner the Sacred Heart is the " delight of the Saints " in Heaven, it must be remembered that the essential happiness of Heaven consists in the perfect possession of God by the intuitive vision of His Divine Essence, together with the love and bliss that thereupon result. This vision of God, with the love and bliss that are its co-natural results, are vital acts that constitute what is termed *eternal life*. Now, created spirits are of themselves incapable of producing these acts ; they can do so only by virtue of a supernatural and gratuitous gift of God which theologians call the *lumen gloriæ*, or light of glory. This " light of glory " may be described as a participation of the uncreated light whereby God contemplates His own Divine Essence. By virtue of this gift the created intelligence is marvellously elevated, and becomes in a manner Divine, by reason of its resemblance to the Divine Intelligence. It fixes its contemplation on this Divine Essence, and in some degree reproduces in itself the image of that Essence (Lessius, *De Summo Bono*, l. ii., cc. 4 and 8, Nos. 51 and 52). From this there results a most ardent fire of Divine love, and from this love an unimaginable bliss and beatification of the entire being. The object of this contemplation, love, and joy is principally and in the first place God Himself, and, secondarily, all

the realities and truths of the natural and supernatural order that are the proper objects of a created intelligence. Among these secondary objects of the beatific vision the first place belongs to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, and especially to His Sacred Heart, the instrument and symbol of His *love*. Illuminated by the "light of glory," the elect behold with endless and unbounded bliss the exquisite perfections, the surpassing beauty, the undying love of the Man-God; they realize all that He is in their regard, all that He has done for them, and all they owe to His unbounded goodness; they see the infinite glory that He gives to His Eternal Father; they bless and glorify the Sacred Heart with endless canticles of praise and homage. In a word, the elect are lost in everlasting ecstasies of admiration, gratitude and love for this most sweet and glorious Heart of their Redeemer. The Sacred Heart is in truth "the delight of all the Saints," gathered round the throne of Christ in everlasting and unbounded bliss in Heaven.

2. **The Sacred Heart, the Delight of the Saints on Earth.**—There are on earth those who may be called Saints as well as in Heaven—namely, those who are striving manfully to serve God, in an eminent degree, in the practice of charity, patience, and the other Christian virtues. Of these, also, it is true to say that the Sacred Heart is their delight. No doubt in this world sorrow and suffering rather than delights are the lot of God's Saints. Yet even in this land of exile God grants to His chosen servants many and wonderful consolations. In the midst of his labours and sufferings St. Paul could

cry aloud: "I abound with joy in all my tribulations"; and St. Francis Xavier, St. Teresa, and many other Saints have borne testimony to the almost overwhelming abundance of the Divine consolations vouchsafed at times to them. It may truly be said, especially since the formal establishment of devotion to the Sacred Heart, that in the Divine Heart of Jesus holy persons on earth find their surest and sweetest source of joy and consolation. When on each successive first Friday of the month the loving clients of the Sacred Heart gather in their thousands round the Eucharistic Banquet, when in lowly humble prayer they kneel before the Tabernacle, when at early morning they hurry to the Holy Sacrifice, does not the tender Heart of Jesus often fill their souls with inexpressible delights, or at least grant to them a peace and joyous confidence that far surpass all pleasures of this world? Was it not before the Tabernacle, or at the moment of Communion, that Blessed Margaret Mary, Father Claude de la Colombière, and many other holy souls have found their greatest and their truest joy? And we, too, in our measure, though far we be from higher sanctity, will find, if we try to serve the Sacred Heart, that It is in truth the highest, purest, holiest delight, not merely of the Saints, but even of those who, with many a fall and many a shortcoming, are yet striving in a very humble and imperfect way to attain to some degree of sanctity.

MEDITATION.

The happiness of Heaven, says St. Augustine, means three things—to *see* God, to *praise* Him, and to *love* Him—*videbimus, laudabimus, amabimus* (*De Civit. Dei*, lib. xxii. cap. 30). By doing these three things now we may, by anticipation, begin to enjoy the happiness of Heaven even here on earth.

1. **To See God.**—"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." The first way to see God now on earth is to endeavour to *avoid all sin.* Sin darkens the mind and raises a wall of separation between us and God. The second way to "see" God is by *purity of intention—i.e.*, by doing all our work for God, and by seeing Him in all we do. The third way is by the practice of the *presence of God*, whereby we often fix the eyes of the soul on God, Who is within us by His grace and by His omnipresence. The fourth is by repeated *acts of gratitude* to God for all His favours, seeing in them all the action of His ever-loving Providence and Goodness. The fifth is by repeated *acts of love* of God. The last is by *conformity* in all things to God's holy Will, whereby we see His hand in everything that may befall us.

2. **To Praise God.**—We praise God by directing to His glory all our thoughts, words, actions, sufferings, and especially our prayers. We praise God, above all, in the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, whereby we offer Him an infinite and adequate oblation of homage, adoration, glory. We praise God when we receive Him in the Blessed Eucharist.

3. **To Love God.**—We shall love God in proportion as we know Him. We shall know God in proportion as we study Him, and strive to *see* Him in the manner pointed out in No. 1. Love of God is in a special manner the fruit of devotion to the Sacred Heart. There is no better way to grow in love of God than to make a speciality of this devotion.

These, therefore, are the ways in which we may make our lives, even here on earth, a foretaste of the bliss of Heaven. If we adopt them we shall find how truly is the Sacred Heart a fountain of all consolations and " the delight of all the Saints."

THE END

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